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The Washington Monthly

MARCH
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Those Flaky Management Consultants

by Gregg Easterbrook

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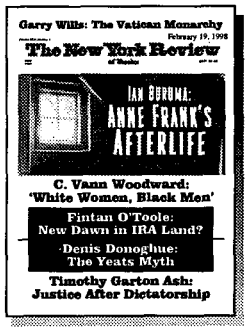

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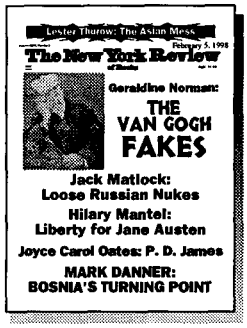

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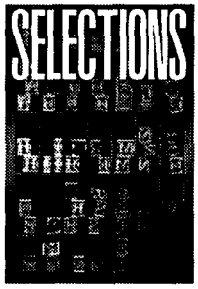

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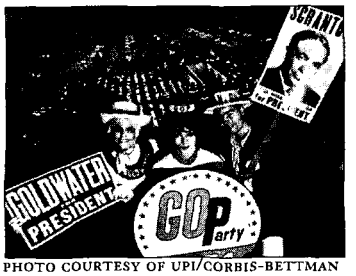

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Letters

Betting On the Ivies

Although Jay Mathews may well be right that the romance of an Ivy League college outstrips its usefulness ("Harvard Schmarvard," Dec. 1997), he unintentionally makes the opposite argument with his list of colleges attended by current governors and U.S. senators. Of the 50 politicians he checked, five went to Yale, and three to Harvard. This means that those two schools, which this year together admitted about 6,000 people — less than one half of one percent of nationwide college admissions — produced eight out of 50 of those officials, or a full 16 percent. Pretty good odds, if I were judging colleges on how many powerful alumni they produced.

DON PORGES
Cambridge, MA

The NAFTA Scam

With regard to Hedrick Smith's article "A Fast-Track Reality Check" (Jan./Feb. 1998), a few things pop to mind. Although his analysis of the effects of NAFTA is well thought out, I can't help but be concerned about the stage of his analysis. Mr. Smith, a self-proclaimed "free trader," should have reasoned long ago that if a trade agreement essentially makes a Third-World country a part of (at least in a trade sense) the U.S., wage deflation might soon follow. It seems like almost yesterday that those teary-eyed industrialists and their government cohorts were standing in front of us proclaiming the virtues of free trade. More than one stated in no uncertain terms that NAFTA would have Mexicans buying U.S.-made washing machines in no time flat. I for one, did not share in their shallow confidence.

The author calls for a sort of "time-out," a reality check if you like. Mr. Smith, pardon me, but you have been duped! The creators of NAFTA knew full well the consequences; they were simply buying time and appealing to your and your co-workers at PBS' humanitarian side by suggesting that NAFTA would give working people a better life. Principally, people go into business not for the betterment of mankind, but for their own self interest. That is the only "Iron Logic" in capitalism and "free-trade."

Working people in the U.S. need to understand that what is good for General Motors is good for General Motors, not them. Being critical of the terms and conditions of trade agreements doesn't make somebody a protectionist. The question now becomes: Which side are you on?

BOYD MCCAMISH
UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION
LOCAL 204
Lumberton, NC

Rent!

Sen. Dale Bumpers is surely correct that the Mining Law of 1872 is ripping off the federal taxpayers "for at least $100 million per year" ("Capitol Hill's Longest Running Outrage," Jan./Feb. 1998). At least. I would say more.

The way to get a reform of this law through an obtuse Congress is to let the mining companies buy their mining sites at $2.50 to $5.00 an acre but require them to pay an annual tax on their acreage equal to the current 30-yr. mortgage rate (now about 7 percent) times the assessed value of the site. This "rent" would bring in a considerable sum to the federal government and might be more easily approved by Congress. It would also encourage the landowners to use their sites more efficiently.

STEVEN CORD
RESEARCH DIRECTOR
HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA
Columbia, MD

More on Lucky

As the affidavit stated, my father was more than just someone who "worked for the New York Parole Board" [as you described it in your Jan./Feb. 1998 "Tilting at Windmills"]. He was for the last nine years of his service, including the pertinent years on the Lucky Luciano matter, executive director of the Division of Parole for New York State or, as he was called then, "Parole Chief." In short, he was the head of parole for the entire state. Thus, his allegations carry that much more weight.

I am fairly certain, but admittedly cannot say for sure, that my father did sign the original copy of the affidavit. As this occurred prior to the days of Xerox machines, all I have is a second, non-original copy of the affidavit. This was his copy, for his records.

JOSHUA DRESSLER
via e-mail

License to Scapegoat

Bravo to Christopher Buckley for an excellent article, "Kooks Around the Corner" (Nov. 1997). In reviewing the book *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From*, Buckley points out the absurdity of rampant conspiracy theories and the people who thrive off of them.

I believe the obsession with conspiracy theories demonstrates that people are constantly trying to find scapegoats rather than taking personal responsibility for their lives. It is sad because it shows that people have lost faith in their own abilities, are quick to blame their own circumstances on outside forces, and are living with increasing distrust and paranoia and a deepening sense of fear.

MARK BODZIAK
via e-mail

A Political Martyr

Richard Blow's analysis of the malaise at *The New Republic* ("Liberalism's Flagship Adrift at Sea," Dec. 1997) is itself a callow piece of work. I've been reading *TNR* since 1967. Things were much worse when Gilbert Harrison was running Edgar Snow's paeans to Mao Tse-tung.

Michael Kelly was sacked because his refusal to look the other way on the corruption of the Clinton administration was making it less likely every day that Martin Peretz would go down in history as mentor to a president. If

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a Republican president had sold the White House as recklessly, remorselessly, and colossally as Bill Clinton did, it wouldn't be Bob Barr calling for his impeachment, it would be *The Washington Monthly* and the editorial board of *The New York Times*. What has yet to penetrate your defenses is that a Democratic president in the 20th century could be so monumentally corrupt.

HAL RIEDL
Baltimore, MD

An Unholy Alliance

I was disappointed with your recent article "Amazing Grace" (Jan./Feb. 1998). I had believed that good scholarship would prevent you from using a few anecdotal stories with "happy endings" to draw such erroneous conclusions. I know most of the incidents and people you describe. They do not provide any substantive basis for violating further the constitutional separation of church and state.

JEAN BREININGER
Muncy, PA

Robert Worth's essay raised a series of interesting points regarding churches and their effect on public policy. However, the article gave an incomplete and often inaccurate representation of the welfare debate and the role religious institutions can play in the system's reform.

Worth suggested that constitutional issues in the welfare and education debate exist as little more than obstacles to effective public policy. He brushes over critical issues of church-state separation as messy details and seems to ignore the fact that the First Amendment exists for a reason. Religious organizations often provide quality services for the needy, but they also often include proselytizing with those services. That is exactly why our government and its citizens cannot be expected to fund these programs. American taxpayers should never be forced to support religious indoctrination, and the needy shouldn't be pressured to sit through religious sermons in order to receive help.

All too often, we look for a quick fix when dealing with complex issues like welfare and education reform. Unfortunately, giving churches public funds isn't the popular panacea Worth's article makes it out to be.

BARRY W. LYNN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AMERICANS UNITED FOR
SEPARATION OF CHURCH
AND STATE
Washington, DC

It's the Law

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend argues the need for a national, universal health-insurance system ("The Double-Edged Helix," Nov. 1997), citing alleged widespread "genetic discrimination" as a reason. While entitled to her opinion, Ms. Kennedy Townsend does the public a disservice by citing such allegations concerning "genetic discrimination" by insurers.

Ms. Kennedy Townsend's article reflects a lack of understanding of current practice and of the legal protections now in place for health insurance. Approximately 90 percent of insured Americans obtain "group" coverage (often through an employer), the vast majority without having to provide any medical information. Under the 1996 federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a person eligible for group coverage cannot be rejected, dropped, or charged higher rates as a result of any health-related test — including a genetic test.

Also under HIPAA, regardless of whether one is covered under a group or individual plan, coverage is guaranteed renewable — which means a health insurer cannot terminate a policy holder's coverage because of a change in that person's health status (including new information about "genetic status"). As a senior public official concerned about access to health insurance, the author ought to be aware that any health plan in violation of these provisions would be violating both federal and state law.

MARIANNE MILLER, DIRECTOR
OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT
HEALTH INSURANCE
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Washington, DC

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Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

Gambling Addicts • Volunteer Slavery • The Pentagon as Turkey Farm
Clinton's Real Enemies • The Rise of the Yachting Class

KEN STARR HAS A RIVAL IN Orange County, California. It seems that the special prosecutor hired by the county to clean up corruption has run up a bill of $37,500 with the following results, according to Esther Schrader of the *Los Angeles Times*: "There was the failure to itemize a Visa bill on one campaign contribution report, the missing employer addresses on another and a third report filed three days late."

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"HOSPITAL RESIDENT PHYSICIANS should not work more than 80 hours a week." That's what the law says in New York. It was passed after there was reason to believe that overworked interns and residents had contributed to the death of 18-year-old Libby Zion. At the time the "reform" struck me as absurdly modest. Few of us can work nearly that long without becoming glassy-eyed.

But even that modest reform has been flouted. "Hospitals in New York City often rely on exhausted and poorly supervised medical residents," writes Esther Fein of *The New York Times*. "Residents say they worry about making mistakes because they routinely work more than the legal maximum of 80 hours a week and often have no senior doctors monitoring their diagnoses and treatments." One second-year resident told Fein, "The senior doctors are often just not here and there's a real taboo about calling them at home when there's a problem in the middle of the night."

The *Monthly* has a solution to this one. Require the senior doctors, as a condition to their use of a hospital, to agree to serve a few nights a year not just to advise residents but to replace enough of them for long enough to give residents and interns a sane work schedule without the long stretches of sleeplessness that are now so common.

When I first floated the idea, a young doctor told me that it might work except that some of the senior doctors were incompetent and out of date in their medical knowledge. But why permit such doctors to practice at all?

My friend Molly Ivins says, "I don't care who he's screwing, as long as it's not the public."

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DID YOU KNOW that nannies are in such great demand that they are now earning $35,000 a year, and, according to Knight-Ridder's Michelle Quinn, "more if they do some house chores"? It seems possible that that the short supply might not be unrelated to the scorn extreme feminists have expressed for the nurturing professions. Now that they're desperate for someone to care for little Jennifer and Jason, I'll bet many of them have changed their tune.

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SPEAKING OF TUNES, THAT deafening music that assails you in many restaurants is not a matter of chance. According to the Wall Street Journal's Andrea Peterson the ear-splitting sound is designed to keep out "the frumpy over-30 crowd" and to make diners eat faster so there will be more table turnover.

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REMEMBER HOW OUTRAGED THE Republicans were because the Clinton administration had given an Arlington burial to a former ambassador and campaign contributor who had falsely claimed wartime service? Well, according to *The Hill*, Republican Sen. Ted Stevens also "sought a waiver to have a former ambassador buried in Arlington National Cemetery who had falsely claimed a military record, but had raised more than $21 million for the Republican Party." At least Clinton's man, Larry Lawrence, was an ambassador to a real country. Stevens's nominee, Daniel J. Terra, was named by the Reagan administration to be "ambassador at large for cultural affairs" after he raised the $21 million for Reagan's 1980 campaign.

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OKAY SO WHAT DO WE think about the Lewinsky hullaballoo? My friend Molly Ivins says "I don't care who he's screwing, as long as it's not the public." I agree. I am troubled, however, by the way he seems to be hitting on women who work for him, although I suspect that this has less to do with his power over them than with the fact that they happen to be around. He has abused his employees in more serious ways. Consider the case of Vince Foster. As I

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wrote in this column in 1993, the president and his wife had no right to have Foster work, while serving as a government employee in the White House, on their private legal business. And Clinton has made some truly miserable appointments and doesn't pay nearly enough attention to what's going on down below in the federal government. He's made the bureaucracy a lot leaner, but not a lot better. His central passion, next to getting laid (or the alternative he is said to deem more permissible) is getting re-elected. Still, his policy choices have been good enough that I'm convinced history will rank him in the upper half of American presidents.

It would be folly to impeach him for sexual behavior or lying about it or trying to get others to lie about it. These actions may diminish our respect for him as a person, but as Molly says, they don't screw the American people.

••••••••

PEOPLE IN CARS HIT BY ONE OF those sport-utility vehicles are four times more likely to die than the people in the sport utes. Fortunately, although they are more likely to kill other motorists, the damage they do is limited by the fact that 3 out of 5 of the sport utility owners are 40 to 65 years old, which is the safest group of drivers. This is because the typical sale price for these vehicles is close to $30,000. But what, asks Keith Bradsher of *The New York Times*, is going to happen when the sport utes are used and cheap enough to be bought by drunks and reckless adolescents? Not only will the behemoths be in the hands of the people most likely to do harm with them but their brakes and other safety devices will have deteriorated.

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IF YOU WANT SOMETHING ELSE to worry about, ponder the results of a survey conducted by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute. Only 26.7 percent of today's college freshmen believe that "keeping up to date with political affairs" is an important life goal compared to 57.8 percent in 1966. Interest in programs to clean up the environment is down from 33.6 percent just five years ago to 19.4 percent today. Commitment to promoting racial understanding fell from 42 percent to 31.8 percent in the same period.

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EVEN IF YOU CONSIDER YOURself enlightened in matters of the heart, you may pause at the title of a lecture given at a conference on women's sexuality at the New Paltz campus of the State University of New York: "Safe, Sane and Consensual S&M: An Alternative Way of Loving."

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ONE OF THE SUREST CAREER steps for a military officer aspiring to high rank is to become an aide to a general. One third of the Army's 300 generals were aides at one point in their career. Yet *The Washington Post*'s Dana Priest reports: "In choosing aides de camp, Army leaders nearly always exclude female officers."

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SIMILAR BAD NEWS COMES FROM the United States Senate, where of the 14 nominees for federal judgeships who have waited longest to be confirmed, 12 are women or minorities.

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I'VE GENERALLY ADMIRED WALter Isaacson's editing of *Time*, which has won two Monthly Journalism Awards in the past year. But I was distinctly unimpressed by the mindless libertarianism of an attack on requiring volunteer service from high school students, which *Time* characterized as "slavery" in a December issue. So I was delighted by a letter to the editor from a teacher named Milton Rouse that straightened out the libertarians at *Time*: "Requiring volunteer work is no more slavery than requiring that students do homework or run around a track during gym."

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BACK TO THOSE SPORT UTILITY vehicles, the latest development is a *stretch* version. Developed by the Excalibur Limousine Service in Brooklyn, it is 34 feet long, carries 18 passengers, and according to James Barron of *The New York Times*, "gets about 5 miles to the gallon."

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A MAJOR TENET OF this magazine — both in its journalism, which seeks to find solutions, and in its politicial philosophy, neoliberalism, which tries to acknowledge liberal failures as it continues to seek to achieve liberal goals — is that we have to face facts that don't fit our case.

As evidence mounts on the effects of the legalization of gambling, we have to admit that some of it casts doubt on a cause we support, the legalization of dope.

As gambling has been legalized in the United States, the number of gambling addicts has increased by half, rising from .84 percent of adults to 1.29, according to a study by Harvard Medical School. And according to another study by Dr. David Phillips of the University of California at San Diego, suicide rates in Las Vegas are four times the national average. The rate of visitor suicides in Atlantic City is double the national average. Americans are now spending 6 percent of the GNP on gambling, compared to the 8 percent they spend on groceries.

A major factor, I suspect, is that gambling casinos are permitted to advertise. This is the same mistake we made after liquor was re-legalized when Prohibition was repealed in 1933. Advertising depicted drinking as glamorous. And of course we allowed advertising from the beginning to lure young people into smoking. This is why I have said that I would never support dope legalization that is not accompanied by a ban on advertising.

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ONE OF WASHINGTON'S BEST-kept secrets is the generosity of federal pensions, which are usually considerably better than those in private business. Four congressmen planning to retire at the end of this session will receive pensions that start between $96,452 and $98,694. But the starting figure doesn't tell half the story. Take former Congressman Hastings Keith, whose civil service pension began at $1560 a month in 1973. He now gets $6,682 a month, thanks to the multiplying effect of annual cost-of-living adjustments. Keith also collects three other pensions from the federal government: $1,546 a month for his military service, $1324 for social security and $871 a month in widower's annuity for his wife's service in the CIA. His total federal pension income in 1998 will be $125,976. Incidentally his civil service pension includes credit for his year in the military even though he also gets a military pension for that service.

Have you considered what an impeachment trial would be like?

Keith has led a lonely crusade against this pension insanity. As far as I know his only allies are this magazine and the National Taxpayers' Union. Too many Washingtonians have friends, neighbors, or relatives in on the goodies to want to blow the whistle.

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BY THE WAY, SPEAKING OF GENerous government pensions, did you notice the photograph in *The New York Times* of Betty Currie's husband Robert, identified as a retired federal employee? His car is in the background. It is a late-model Mercedes.

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THE WORST TAX IS OUR NAME for the social security payroll tax. We call it that because it weighs heaviest on working people with modest incomes and is not paid on income over $65,000.

This year there are two proposals for reform before the Congress, one by a Democrat, Ted Kennedy, another by a Republican, John Ashcroft. Kennedy wants to lower the present rate of 6.2 percent to 5.3 and make up for the lost revenue by having the tax apply to income over $65,000. Ashcroft would allow the tax to be deducted from income tax payments. The catch to this proposal is that it doesn't offer a way to replace the lost income. But it's good to have a Republican who at least sees that something must be done about the payroll tax. Let's hope enough of his colleagues wake up to the need to enact legislation that is effective in bringing relief to workers and that they are, in contrast to Ashcroft, realistic enough to find other revenue to replace what is lost. My own solution is a larger reduction than Kennedy proposes for income under $65,000 that would be financed by a larger increase on incomes over $65,000.

Given the way the rich are getting richer, we might even make the break point higher. Do you have any idea how well the top fifth of Americans are doing these days? In New York, their average income is $132,390. In Maryland, it's $147,971. In Connecticut, it's $149,594. Even in states like Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Utah, the figure is more than $100,000.

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MAYBE WE COULD ASK THE FORtunate fifth to sacrifice a few feet off the length of their yachts. *The New York Times* reports that sales of sailboats over 35 feet long rose 40 percent last year. The number of registered recreational boats has more than doubled in the last two decades. There were 12.1 million in 1996 and, as the *Times* reports, the boat yards have really been humming since then.

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AS THEY WATCH THE NEW RUSSian business elite drive around Moscow in their Mercedes 600is flashing special passes that give them immunity from the police, the average Russian is saying, writes Christina Freeland of the *Financial Times*, "Everything Marx told us about communism was false but everything he told us about capitalism was true."

•••••••••

REMEMBER "WORKFARE"? THAT was the requirement in the welfare reform law that people on relief who can't find regular jobs must do community service work which the states were supposed to arrange by Oct. 22. But by the end of the year only three states were even trying to meet the requirement, according to David Whitman of *U.S. News*. Because getting people back into the habit of work is so important, this is bad news. It's also understandable. Such work is not easy to arrange. But it can be done. New York City has 18,000 welfare recipients who, writes Whitman, "are now working off their grants 20 hours a week picking up trash, cleaning public parks and streets, answering phones, and the like."

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HAVE YOU CONSIDERED WHAT the impeachment trial of Bill Clinton would be like? The setting is the august chamber of the United States Senate. Presiding is the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. And the 100 members of the United States Senate gravely attend to the evidence — evidence adduced by questions like "And what happened after he unzipped his zipper?"

This would be absurd to the point of insanity. Yet it is where the Starr investigation seems to be heading. There is likely to be evi-

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dence of perjury and of subornation of perjury by the president. One part of our brain feels that he shouldn't be allowed to get away with it. Another says that impeachment would be overkill. A recent letter to the Washington Post said it would be better to let evidence remain "murky" so we won't have to decide whether to proceed with impeachment. Another suggests the Papuan term "mikita" should govern: "That which we know to be true but have agreed not to talk about."

I think the letter writers are very close to the right solution. I don't, however, agree that we can stop talking. Gossip is human. And I suspect the president deserves to be the butt of those late night jokes. But let's abandon the notion that there must be some kind of legal adjudication of the case of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky.

As a nation we sensed that it would be overkill to impeach Ronald Reagan for Iran Contra, and we expressed that sense through the decision by Lee Hamilton and Warren Rudman, who headed the Congressional inquiry, not to pursue the issue of Reagan's guilt, even though his offenses were not personal but matters of state. I think it was a wise decision. A similar decision would be even wiser now.

As a realistic matter, I think the best chance of avoiding impeachment lies in the Republicans realizing that they don't want to give Gore a head start on 2000 by putting him in the White House now.

So I suspect the greatest danger to Bill Clinton will come not from the Congress but from Ken Starr, or to be more precise, from Starr's staff. Remember, last year Starr wanted to get out of this job and go to California and enjoy the pleasures of Pepperdine College and the Pacific Coast. But his staff rebelled. Having recruited them, how could he desert? He still has his next job. They don't. They need their resumes to reek of success, not failure. They have to nail the president. This is what would worry me if I were in Bill Clinton's shoes.

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SPEAKING OF WASHINGTON insanity, did you know that the office of the Senate Sergeant at Arms has a Director of Communications, Planning, and Policy? When a history of makework is written, it may well prove that its great institutional pioneers were the hangers-on in legislative appendages such as the office of the Sergeant at Arms and the office of the Doorkeeper.

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TWA'S FLIGHT 800 CRASHED because a spark ignited the center wing fuel tank. Most of us know that much, yet few also know another factor in the explosion: the kind of fuel TWA was using. It is called "Jet A." It has a flash point of 86 degrees F at 13,800 feet, the altitude which Flight 800 had attained at the moment it exploded, *below* the estimated temperature of the vapors in the fuel tank. You will recall that these vapors had been heated by the air-conditioning units directly under the fuel tank, which had been running for three and a half hours due to delays before takeoff. The Navy uses another fuel, JP5, with a flash point that is higher than the temperature of Flight 800's fuel tank. But JP5 is not used by commercial air lines. Why? According to Don Phillips of *The Washington Post*, "JP5 now costs two cents a gallon more."

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LINDA TRIPP MAKES $88,000 A year in her public affairs job at the Pentagon. This may come as a surprise to those who have the impression that government employees are all underpaid. Some are — the failure to pay competitive salaries to accountants has been a factor in the decline of the IRS — but many more, especially in the middle and upper-middle grades, are adequately or even generously compensated.

One reason for this is inflated performance ratings. Tripp has had several salary raises since she went to the Pentagon two years ago. "Favorable job evaluations," according to Amy Goldstein and Rene Sanchez of *The Washington Post*, "helped boost her salary." She's not alone: Three-quarters of the Pentagon's 114 other public affairs employees are also rated "outstanding."

At the White House she was considered "constantly disagreeable, someone who tried to act like a big gatekeeper, a player in everything, when she in fact was really only a secretary."

Why then did the White House arrange to have her hired at the Pentagon? Because of her "sour attitude," she was viewed as "something of a dangerous commodity."

Is it right to ship someone who is "constantly disagreeable" from one part of the joint to another? Obviously not — people in any part of the government should care about having it all work well — but it happens all the time. It's called "turkey farming." And it's usually done because it's easier than firing.

"One of the best ways to get a better job in government," one official told the *Post*, "is for people to really need you to move out of the job you have." ●

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A Brief History of Management Consultants

Who are these people and why are we paying them so much money?

BY GREGG EASTERBROOK

NEWS ITEM: FRANKLIN COVEY, THE "life management" firm founded through Stephen R. Covey's bestseller, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, announced that its 1997 revenues totaled $433 million. The company has sold 12 million books, including *The Ten Natural Laws of Time and Life Management*. Franklin Covey products include the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families" audio tapes, a "One Day Getting to Synergy Workshop," and a "Three Day Time Quest Management Workshop." The company notes that "one in 3.5 people in the state of Michigan carry a Franklin Day Planner," a device for keeping lists.

Each year, Franklin Covey holds seminars for 750,000 people from corporations, government agencies, and schools, and says it has "certified more than 14,000 in-house corporate facilitators." Its client list boasts the Department of Energy, which has spent at least $500,000 on Covey workshops; some 2,900 school districts; the federal departments of Defense, Interior, and Transportation; the U.S. Postal Service; corporations such as AT&T, Intel, and General Electric; and President Bill Clinton, who spent a day being privately tutored by Steven Covey during Thanksgiving week of 1994. Covey, once the subject of a PBS documentary, asserts that he has discovered "the universal value system of all mankind." His company is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol FC.

GREGG EASTERBROOK *is a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly, *the* Atlantic Monthly, *and* U.S. News & World Report.

SCENE: Camp David, Thanksgiving week of 1994. A light snow falls on the Maryland mountains. President William Jefferson Clinton sits in his study, where an intern is assisting him. Linda Tripp, a trusted aide, shows in Steven R. Covey.

CLINTON: Thank you for coming. I would have liked to go out to the life-management resort facility your company runs in Sundance, Utah. I hear that government agencies and major corporations spend tens of millions of dollars per year to send people to your resort, where the food and the snow bunnies are four-star. I mean, to read "wisdom literature," like your brochure says.

COVEY: Mr. President, are you proactive? Do you synergize?

CLINTON: You see, the Republicans have just taken over the House, and I need advice on —

COVEY: Mr. President, do you make lists? Do you focus on your goals?

CLINTON: Well, doesn't everybody —

COVEY: Lists! Make proactive lists! Make lists *before* you plan to do something, not afterward! Then keep the lists in your pocket in a Franklin Day Planner, as my publicists say with a perfectly straight face that one person in 3.5 in Michigan does! Then, exactly seven times a day, take out your list and look at it! Do you mind if I stand on your desk?

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CLINTON: Go ahead. Actually I like to do things on my desk, too.

COVEY: (Climbs on desk, stands.) That's better! Now I am much taller than you! It makes me feel synergistic!

CLINTON: About this making lists, my point is, doesn't everyone —

COVEY: Mr. President, are you aware that my book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* was on *The New York Times* bestseller list for 270 weeks, yet all this book really says is that people should make lists and pursue goals?

CLINTON: That's mighty fine advice, but —

COVEY: Are you aware that major corporations pay my company millions of dollars to have recent college graduates conduct seminars in which they play Native American chant CDs and tell people to make lists and have goals? Are you aware that the U. S. armed services have hired my company for this purpose?

CLINTON: Should I be scared now?

COVEY: No! Be synergistic! Don't you see what this means?

CLINTON: That millions of dollars a year are going down the drain?

COVEY: No! That I have discovered one of the universal laws of mankind — that people will listen to any kind of drivel at all if it gives them an excuse to go to a vacation resort at someone else's expense!

CLINTON: Say, that's good. I'll mention that to my trusted aide Dick Morris.

COVEY: And I have found that I can empower myself to synergize a spiritual paradigm shift! Whoops, that's a copyrighted phrase. Since I mentioned it, you will have to send me an extra $20,000.

CLINTON: Now about those Department of Energy contracts. My people over there have been having a few problems with little things like managing nuclear waste. There was that regrettable incident when the plutonium canisters were sent by FedEx to the Ben & Jerry's factory and mixed in with the Rainforest Crunch. I assume your seminars will help them deal with problems like that.

COVEY: Absolutely not! Mr. President, actually dealing with problems is old-fashioned, linear thinking. Feeling your way to spiritual dissipation of problems is the goal of life management.

CLINTON: Well ... very little of what you've said makes any sense whatsoever, but since you've been promoted on PBS, you must be respectable!

COVEY: And now it's time to get in touch with our synergy. We should hug!

CLINTON: Really, if it's all the same to you —

COVEY: Then hug your intern over there!

MONICA: (Jumps up eagerly.) Sure!

CLINTON: (They embrace passionately.) Baby, I want you to get a Franklin Day Planner. Write on your list, "Deny, deny, deny." Look at it exactly seven times daily.

COVEY: Mr. President, hugs build synergy. You should have energy-flow contact with this woman once a day!

CLINTON: You mean, cut back?

COVEY: We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience. [Actual Steven Covey quote.]

MONICA: So if I'm subpoenaed I should just say it was a spiritual experience?

COVEY: A brilliant young lady! Mr. President, I advise empowering your bonds by giving her heartfelt gifts. Everyone will realize your link was spiritual.

NEWS ITEM: Innovation Network, a management training firm, has begun offering week-long "convergences" at a Santa Barbara resort hotel. The cost is $1,595 per person for the sessions alone: Travel, room, and meals are additional. Attendees are coached by "facilitators" and offered such courses as "Learning to Listen Through Drumming" and "Metaphorical Speaking." Special events include outdoor barbecues, riding and windsurfing, and Sparkle Day. According to *Forbes* magazine, some 72 percent of large U.S. corporations send managers to retreats such as this. Innovation Network clients include the Bureau of Land

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Management, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Patent and Trademark Office.

SCENE: A resort hotel in California, May 1944. Windsurfers frolic along a beach; buses shuttle in and out for winery tours; corporate managers relax by an Olympic-sized pool, leering at young women in swimsuits. Generals Omar Bradley, Dwight Eisenhower, and Matthew Ridgway enter, escorted by trainers of the Innovation Network.

RIDGWAY: This is horseshit. We have an invasion to plan.

MALE FACILITATOR: You are resisting. I sense negative energy. It's very dark side.

RIDGWAY: Dark side! Young man you have no idea what the real dark side —

EISENHOWER: Matt, the president feels it is necessary that we be exposed to the principles of metaphorical management before we launch D-Day.

FEMALE FACILITATOR: What interesting khaki caps, are they from The Gap? You'll fit right in, today is Hat Day. [Actual Innovation Network event. On Hat Day, group members "wear each other's hats," building trust or at least exchanging head lice.]

BRADLEY: Let's get this over with.

MALE FACILITATOR: Life training is not something one "gets over with." It is not a goal or a destination. It is a process! It cannot be measured in restrictive, eurocentric linear terms like "accomplishment" or "product."

EISENHOWER: Tell us what you can fast, we've got to get back to London.

FEMALE FACILITATOR: We can't "tell" you anything. We can only draw out the wisdom you already possess.

MALE FACILITATOR: That's why we're going to send you on a simulation.

RIDGWAY: Now we're getting somewhere — war games.

FEMALE FACILITATOR: Oh no, nothing so dark side. The five of us are going to hike up into the Santa Ynez Mountains, carrying only organic provisions of course. There we will be confronted with a simulated crisis. Your responses will teach teamwork, empathy, and co-awareness. Then we'll all come back for Sparkle Day and tequila tasting by the pool!

BRADLEY: Let's move out.

(Later, in the Santa Ynez Mountains.)
MALE FACILITATOR: Isn't that a glorious sunset? Just what Native American peoples in their high spiritual awareness used to experience before corporate voracity disturbed Mother Earth to build things like, well, like the resort hotels my company uses. OK, forget that point. Now the simulated crisis.

FEMALE FACILITATOR: Help! Help! My workplace environment is sexually hostile!

RIDGWAY: Show me the son of a bitch who did this to you, and I'll punch his teeth out!

MALE FACILITATOR: No, no. You must resolve this crisis through metaphorical management and mutual co-dependence. No references of any kind to race, gender, age, or disabilities may be made by anyone. No value judgments or eurocentric linear comments will be permitted. Nobody gets the tequila unless they follow the rules. Now, form a circle and hold hands ...

(Several months later.)
EISENHOWER: I see by the Internet that our forces were repulsed at Normandy. People are saying the invasion was poorly planned and seemed leaderless.

BRADLEY: That's so judgmental.

RIDGWAY: Our throughput transactional quotient is up again this week. It makes me feel fulfilled.

NEWS ITEM: Anthony Robbins, a "peak performance coach," recently had a private session with Bill and Hillary Clinton to advise them on "the power of positive thinking." When not meeting with the Clintons, Anthony Robbins Associates hosts "team consciousness" retreats for corporate managers, and has staged retreats for California state agencies and other government offices. The firm, which puts its revenues at $50 million annually, is so successful that Robbins now owns an entire Fijian island, plus a California estate with a helipad. Robbins, the seven-foot-tall author of the bestseller *Awake the Giant Within*, is famous for asking clients to walk barefoot across hot coals. Sessions may also include meditation and Native

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American chants. Robbins asserts that mystical secrets locked in the right-side of the brain can be unleashed using his techniques, and that an outpouring of creativity and wealth will follow. Employees of his corporation are required to complete all telephone conversations with the phrase, "Have a great day!"

SCENE: The Vatican, 1633. Executive suites of The Inquisition Inc., a Delaware-chartered corporation. An unusually tall man stands near a desk that adjoins a pillory. Galileo Galilei is dragged in by Swiss guards.

GALILEO: But I tell you it's true! The earth revolves around the sun! Copernicus has proven it!

SPECIAL INQUISITOR STARR: Your right brain betrays you, Brother Galileo. To unlock your true potential, we have called in a consultant.

ANTHONY ROBBINS: Look upon me! Breathe in, then breathe out. Drink plenty of expensive mineral water to flush your body of toxins. Maximize time use and billing opportunities by traveling by helicopter.

GALILEO: Soothe, thou art a tall man!

ANTHONY ROBBINS: Much taller than Steven R. Covey! He may be the first "author" to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange, but even when he's standing on a chair or desk I am taller.

GALILEO: What is it you want from me?

ANTHONY ROBBINS: Certainly nothing crass or material or commercial. I want you to realize your true potential by walking across these hot embers.

GALILEO: Torture! Are you saying that the Inquisition has resorted to torture! Western civilization stands at the gates of its demise.

ANTHONY ROBBINS: Oh, no, management consultants are a far greater threat to Western civilization than any medieval force. But relax, I'm not in business to hurt my client's feet, I am in business to pull the wool over their eyes. With my metaphysical guidance, you will walk the coals unharmed.

GALILEO: Why would I want to?

ANTHONY ROBBINS: Princess Diana, with whom I was very, very close, and who personally credited me with her self-realization [actual claim by Robbins], once asked me the same thing. "Anthony," she said with her piercing wit, "why would I want to walk across blazing coals barefoot?" And I replied, "Highness, the real question is, why would you want to pay several thousand dollars to walk across blazing coals barefoot." Yet hundreds of corporate managers and government officials do this every year! They do it because it unleashes potential!

GALILEO: Their inner potential?

ANTHONY ROBBINS: No, you fatuous stargazer, *my* financial potential! The more people who pay me for this nonsense, the more often I get to fly my Gulfstream to Fiji to lie on the beach with native girls!

GALILEO: You really are a genius. I shall cross the coals then, and without fear. (Galileo removes his sandals and walks confidently across the blazing embers. The Swiss guards blanch and turn away; Anthony Robbins pays Navajo flute music on a portable CD. Galileo lets fly a few "Holy Madonnas!" but completes the walk.) I did it! I have unlocked my personal potential! Now nothing frightens me. Cardinal, I refuse to sign! I will die before I renounce the truth.

SPECIAL INQUISITOR STARR: This is not the result I wish to leak to the media.

ANTHONY ROBBINS: Wait, he'll come around. (Fixes an evil gaze on Galileo.) I am now going to read to you from a chapter of *Unlimited Power*, one of my "books," about how I realized my own charm and charisma ...

GALILEO: I recant!

NEWS ITEM: News and wire reports indicate that corporate and personal training companies are a growth industry, signing numerous contracts with both businesses and government agencies. Career Track, a Colorado company that teaches "critical thinking skills," has staged conferences for the Michigan Department of Civil Service. Global Visions, a California firm specializing in "Real Time Strategic Change," has hosted conferences for major corporations such as Ford and Marriott, and was recently paid about $500,000 by the U.S. Forest Service to stage an employee retreat. Strategic Success Systems, a Baltimore firm, holds self-esteem conferences for schools, firms, and government agencies, and offers clients a chance to meet with its president, Darlene Butler, who holds the title, The

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First Lady of Positive Talk™. Vision 360, a Florida firm, recently charged the County Commission of West Palm Beach $10,500 for the clerk of the Circuit Court and her aides to attend a three-day retreat at a Vero Beach golf resort. Pat Riley, coach of the Miami Heat, charges $25,000 for a one-hour "success motivation lecture." The Ned Hermann Group, which frequently holds seminars for state and local governments, is now marketing its Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument, which "identifies thinking styles and preferred work elements." Edward de Bono, a management consultant whose success has enabled him to buy a small island in Venice, has advised many corporations, and the government of Singapore, on his theory of "lateral thinking," which is said to unleash creativity and an outpouring of wealth.

SCENE: A factory in Detroit, 1908. Henry Ford sits with several engineers, poring over design drawings. A foreman, a lawyer, and a shop steward are nearby. In the distance the red glow of molten metal can be seen.

SECRETARY: Mr. Ford? It's the consultants.

HENRY FORD: Are you sure we have to do this?

LAWYER: To get regulatory approval, yes. The new federal lateral-thinking impact statement law requires it. And to sell the Model T in California, we'll need certification from the State Board of Self Esteem.

HENRY FORD: All right then, as long as none of them works for the Patent Office.

THE FIRST LADY OF POSITIVE TALK™: You can do it! I know you can realize your goal of selling franchised prepackaged ginsana wraps!

HENRY FORD: What are you taking about? I'm planning to sell cars.

FACILITATOR FROM CAREER TRACK: That would deplete resources! If you focus and globalize your thinking, you will see that service industries are the wave of the future.

HENRY FORD: People need transportation. You can't have service industries until you can move goods.

PAT RILEY: Look sharp! Keep moving! Stay focused! Wear expensive shirts! Don't foul in the backcourt! When the going gets tough, the tough hire agents.

CONSULTANT FROM VISION 360: This is a place of business. I can't prioritize in this atmosphere. What do you say we all adjourn to Hilton Head?

HENRY FORD: But I've got to make the final design decisions for the Model T.

COUNSELOR FROM GLOBAL VISIONS: You shouldn't try to do anything. You should just do. Empty your minds, and the answers will come.

NED HERMANN: It is impossible to analyze throughput, unleash creativity, or acquire unlimited wealth without the Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument. Here, slip it on.

HENRY FORD: It's a baseball cap.

NED HERMANN: You are so linear. Where is your vision? To the untrained eye this may appear to be a baseball cap. To me, it's a $7,500-a-day consulting fee.

HENRY FORD: Get these people out of here! We have real work to do.

EDWARD DE BONO. "Real" work?

HENRY FORD: Yes. Making products. Creating jobs. Solving problems. Real work! Just like businesses and government agencies all over the country have real work they should be doing, rather than engaging in touchy-feely management-consultant mumbo-jumbo!

EDWARD DE BONO: Think laterally, as I describe in my historic "book," *From Socratic to de Bono Thinking* [actual title]. What you call "real work" leads to frustration, exhaustion, labor-management disputes, accidents, political controversies, lawsuits, anger, and hard feelings. The sort of work management consultants do leads to high incomes, pleasant accommodations, fine wines, sexual diversion, ego gratification, beautiful locales, easy-going conversation with the rich and famous — and no nagging, actual product. Your business is to engage in backbreaking labor to build a disputed product and, if very lucky, return 10 percent on equity. Our business is to do hardly anything and keep everything. So just who understands "real" work?

HENRY FORD: It's decided. Cancel the Model T. I am going into the metaphorical management facilitation business. ●

Research assistance provided by Nurith C. Aizenman.

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Tidbits & Outrages

And We Thought Our Welfare System Was Bad

The mayor of a small town in southern Brazil recently banned the sale of birth control in an effort to increase the population, thus making the town eligible for more government-funded programs.

But Will He Vote Bush in 2000?

According to Taiwanese spiritual leader Hoh-Ming Chen, God will be reincarnated on March 31 in Garland, Texas, at 10 a.m.

But Can She Sew?

Angry that his wife would not have sex with him, a Honduran man castrated himself with a machete.

And We Thought They Didn't Have HMOs

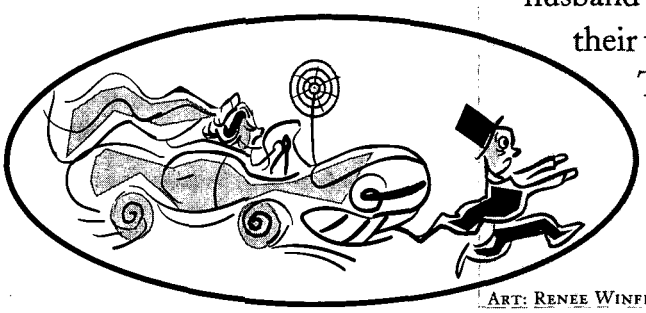
A Russian woman recently underwent surgery to have a pair of forceps removed from her abdomen that had been accidentally left inside her during an operation 25 years ago.

Lucky It Wasn't the Gas Stove

Neighbors called the police on an Ohio man after his pet python apparently turned on a faucet and caused his bathtub to overflow.

Guess Who'll Be In Charge of the Remote

A Wisconsin woman was sentenced to a month in jail after ramming her husband with the car on their wedding night. The newlyweds were having a dispute over the volume of the radio.



ART: RENEE WINFIELD

Call It Special Ed

Seminary students in Jerusalem called for one of the school's rabbis to be dismissed after he was seen at a nude bar dressed up as a cowboy. Seminary officials claim the rabbi was on an "educational mission."

My Husband Never Wore That!

A Tennessee woman is suing a Nashville funeral home for putting the wrong body in her deceased husband's coffin.

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The Real Lesson of the Asian Meltdown

Too bad nobody's listening

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

TRUTH BE TOLD, MOST AMERICANS dislike their bank. Long lines, surly tellers, obscene ATM fees, and a wait of anywhere from three days to 30 years for a check to clear have combined to make banks a source of minor irritation for most consumers. The banking *system*, however, is another matter entirely. Unlike the stock and bond markets, with their risk and drama and potential for big returns, the banking industry is decidedly less glamorous. Stories in the press, usually buried on page 12 of the business section, positively ooze with steamy talk of prime rates, loan portfolios, and capital requirements. Hardly the stuff of which Hollywood blockbusters are made. As such, most of us never think about the business of banking at all. Until something goes wrong. At that point, all hell breaks loose and everybody wants some answers.

Such is the case with the recent meltdown in Asia. Prior to last summer, few Americans could have told you what continent Thailand is on, much less what the country's financial system looks like. But starting in early July, when the value of the Thai currency, the baht, fell through the floor — triggering financial shock waves that soon brought down the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and South Korea — U.S. newspapers from Boston to Phoenix were awash in articles detailing the economic downfall of the Asian tigers.

Rehashing the collapse of Japan's bubble economy in the early '90s, financial pundits traced the roots of the recent crisis to Southeast Asia's having emulated the Japanese model, with its "cozy" relationships between government, banking, and industry. Under Japan's *keiretsu* system, for instance, banks, trading companies, and industrial firms share common stock holdings, an arrangement that lends itself to preferential — and often unwise — financial dealings. Similarly, South Korea's economy is characterized by close ties between its banks and its *chaebol*, the handful of giant conglomerates that dominate the economy. Under such a system, in which banks have an understandably tough time maintaining their objectivity and independence, Korean banks lent too much money to their industrial partners during good economic times, only to be left holding the bag when many of their ventures failed. Thus when Kia Motors collapsed last July, for example, it took the Korea First Bank down with it.

Until recently, rapid growth, coupled with lax accounting and disclosure policies, helped hide the tigers' bad lending practices, overextended banks, and the general lack of oversight of the region's financial institutions. In the months leading up to the storm, everyone from *Money* magazine to the International Monetary Fund was touting Southeast Asia's investment potential and economic fundamentals. When the bubble burst, however, the banks (and the financial experts) were caught with their proverbial pants down. And as talk of bailouts by the IMF swirled around Washington and Wall Street, a major sticking point in the deals became whether Asian leaders would accept the requisite financial reforms, including greater transparency in the region's financial systems, tighter loan standards, a crackdown on insolvent banks, and improved accounting procedures. The U.S. media joined in the call for reform. A Jan. 4 article in *The Washington Post* criticized the lack of government oversight of Thailand's banks as part of a "deregulated financial system run amok." Suggested the *Post*, "As with the savings and loan scandal in the United States,

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which led to a shakeout of the American finance sector and greater regulation, so too Asia might retool by cleaning up its banking mess."

One by one, with varying degrees of resistance, the ailing nations accepted the IMF's conditions, and soon the U.S. media were celebrating the coming westernization of East Asia's economies. Even China, which escaped the storm this time around, announced plans to restructure its banks more along the lines of the U.S. Federal Reserve system in an effort to "learn the lessons from Southeast Asia and adopt a more cautious approach," explained the governor of the People's Bank of China. U.S. financial pundits, although acknowledging the gravity of the situation, seemed positively gleeful that "the Asian miracle" had at last collapsed, offering definitive proof that Western capitalism is king. "This Year's Economic Lesson: Japan's Model Failed," proclaimed a headline in the Dec. 30 *Wall Street Journal*. "Asia Miracle Fades: Sun sets on crony capitalism," crowed the Nov. 26 *USA Today*.

With fallout from Asia rattling markets from Moscow to Sao Paolo, the international financial community launched discussions on how to prevent future meltdowns. Talk of a global regulatory system was bandied about by heavy hitters ranging from Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin to billionaire currency speculator George Soros, with Soros going so far as to assert that "the private sector is ill-suited to allocate international credit" and proposing an international oversight agency to help stabilize the world's banking system. (You know the situation is serious when the Übercapitalists start sounding like World Federalists.)

So, with all this excitement on the international financial scene, what have U.S. policy makers learned from the upheaval? Damn little, it appears. As a matter of fact, right up until Congress' winter recess — even as South Korea & Co. were being told to westernize their financial systems ASAP — members of the House were working fast and furiously to pass a bill that would move the U.S. banking system closer to that of South Korea or Japan. That's right, closer.

In late October, the House Commerce Committee put its stamp of approval on H.R. 10, aka the Financial Services Competition Act of 1997. It seems that, in order to keep up with foreign banks, as well as with rival domestic institutions such as stock brokerages, U.S. banks want to expand their "profit centers" beyond the traditional check cashing/money lending business. Enter H.R. 10, a comprehensive deregulation bill that would not only tear down the legal walls now separating the banking, securities, and insurance branches of our financial sector, but would also undercut laws barring banks from owning, or being owed by, non-finance-related businesses (e.g., currently, Bill Gates and Microsoft cannot own NationsBank). Largely because of squabbling between the banking and insurance industries — both of which have a considerable stake in the fine print of a deregulation bill — the Commerce Committee failed to reconcile its version of H.R. 10 with the one approved earlier by the Banking Committee in time for a floor vote. Undaunted, Banking Committee Chairman James Leach has pledged that "financial modernization" — that's code for banking deregulation — "will be among the first major issues taken up by the House next year."

Now, East Asia aside, those who recall the S&L debacle of the '80s can probably think of one or two reasons why efforts to deregulate the U.S. financial sector should be approached with caution. After the Garn-St. Germain Act of 1982 cleared the way for the thrift industry to expand its services beyond the basic home-loan business, it took all of seven years for such well-intentioned folks as Charlie Keating to make the industry so "modern" and "competitive" it required a $130 billion (and counting) bailout from taxpayers.

Washington, however, is not known for its long-term memory, which is precisely why Asia's current woes should be of intense interest to U.S. policy makers. Because whatever combination of factors ultimately led to Asia's implosion, its freewheeling banking style did not do good things for the region. When asked about such concerns, however, Undersecretary of the Treasury John Hawke — a veteran advocate of banking deregulation — dismisses the comparisons. "The U.S. has a totally different kind of system," he insists. "I don't think you can look at whatever happened over [in Asia] and say this proves the case for the U.S., where we have an entirely different set of regulatory laws and traditions." Perhaps. But taking a step toward the South Korean or Japanese system seems a peculiar way to maintain these different traditions. Besides, a system-wide meltdown is merely the worst-case outcome of the "modernization" plan wending its way through Congress. There are plenty of more immediate, less dramatic ways the American people (and economy) could suffer, some of which can already be seen across Europe in countries that have "modernized" their banks. So before Congress resumes its crusade to make our financial system more competitive, the public would do well to take a close look at the debate. Otherwise, the next economic crisis to hit the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* may have its roots in New York rather than Bangkok.

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Divided We Stand

First, a bit of groundwork. The U.S. financial system can, for the most part, be divided into three major categories: insurance, securities, and banking (which typically includes the savings-and-loan industry). But commercial banks hold a unique place in our economy. Customer deposits are guaranteed by a government insurance fund to preserve consumer confidence in — and reduce the danger of a run on — the banks during an economic downturn. In exchange for access to this safety net, banks' activities are circumscribed by law to minimize financial risk to the taxpayer. Under the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, passed in the wake of the 1929 stock market crash, banks are not allowed to engage in the securities business and vice-versa. Nor, according to both federal and state laws, may banks enter the insurance industry. The aim of this compartmentalization is to protect the "safety and soundness" of our economy by limiting undue consolidation of resources and preventing conflicts of interests between banks and non-banking affiliates. In other words, we don't want a handful of powerful financial conglomerates holding the rest of the economy hostage, nor do we want banks taking stupid risks with federally insured funds for the benefit of their business affiliates.

Even as South Korea & Co. were being told to westernize their financial systems, the House was working to move the U.S. banking system closer to that of South Korea and Japan.

Now, fans of deregulation tend to be more optimistic than the average shmoe. With an unshakable faith in the better angels of human nature, they maintain that such laws are unnecessary and that, if only government would keep its meddlesome mitts off the nation's financial institutions (or telecommunications firms or public utilities or ...), the upstanding, ultrarational professionals who run these industries could usher in a new era of perfect competition, efficiency, and productivity. Opponents of Glass-Steagall point to studies indicating that, contrary to prior belief, the 1929 crash had little to do with banks' involvement in the securities business, and they insist that the law serves only to undermine U.S. banks' competitiveness in the global marketplace. Moreover, despite bankers' innate desire to do what is right, deregulators argue, limiting banks' activities actually *forces* them to take greater risks in order to turn a profit on the services they may provide. (This, they claim, was the true cause of all those big bank failures in the late '80s and early '90s.) If laws such as Glass-Steagall were repealed, so the logic goes, commercial banks could move smoothly — and cautiously — down the path toward providing customers with one-shop-stopping for their financial services needs. (Lost in this happy world of pure market capitalism, deregulators seem oblivious to the irony that, as the *Associated Press* recently noted, Japan is hoping to make its financial sector more competitive with a "Big Bang" reform package aimed at "scrapping regulations ... that have fostered cozy ties between *banks, brokers, and insurance companies*." [italics added])

Whatever the origins of our compartmentalized system, the potential dangers of dismantling it remain. First, there is the risk to individual consumers. If NationsBank and Travelers insurance merge, for example, how can we prevent a system under which the resulting conglomerate, or some of its more enterprising employees, can subtly suggest that a loan is more likely to be approved if the applicant also buys her homeowners insurance from the firm?

Then there are the more systemic concerns. Let's say Chase Manhattan decides to buy Merrill Lynch. If Merrill Lynch later loses a bundle on pork bellies, how long before Chase feels compelled to bail out its subsidiary, using insured deposits? Not only does this expose the bank's shareholders and depositors to serious losses, it gives Merrill Lynch less incentive to follow cautious investment policy. After all, why not take risks in the market if you have a guaranteed source of government funds available to save your bacon when you screw up? (Which, incidentally, is Congress' major objection to bailing out Asian banks and their foreign creditors.)

Advocates of financial consolidation argue that safeguards already exist to prevent such conflicts of interest. But as Ricki Helfer, then-chairwoman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., told a congressional subcommittee last March, "In times of stress, firewalls tend to weaken. ... We found during the banking crisis [of the late '80s] that the firewalls tended to get 'squishy' when significant problems were raised in

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the banking organization." Just how squishy is "squishy"? When the stock market crashed in 1987, then-megabank Continental Illinois (which had already undergone a $4.5 billion government bailout in '84) breached internal firewalls to prop up a securities subsidiary it operated by special permission from regulators. Ignoring restrictions on the amount banks may loan to subsidiaries, Continental extended $240 million to securities dealer First Options, to cover $90 million in trading losses. Regulators reprimanded Continental, but bank executives dismissed the criticism. Whether or not Continental had done anything wrong was simply "a matter of interpretation," the bank's chairman and CEO, Thomas Theobald, told the *Chicago Tribune* shortly after the bailout. "The bank took the view, he said, that a loan to one of its subsidiaries wasn't subject to the lending limit." So much for those fabulous firewalls.

What's more, as mega-mergers yield conglomerates too economically important for the government to allow to fold, regulators will become increasingly less inclined to interfere in such shenanigans and this type of big-ticket rescue will likely become increasingly common. Already, this "too big to fail" phenomenon characterizes the U.S. banking sector. Over the past decade, regulators have opted to prop up a variety of major banks, at some pretty impressive costs: $4 billion for the 1988 bailout of First Republic, $2 billion for the 1990 MCorp. bailout, $2.3 billion for the Bank of New England in 1991 .... And just think of the exciting bailout possibilities there will be once a few dozen mammoth banking-insurance-securities conglomerates rule our economy.

Mend It, Don't End It

When all else fails, the fallback argument for financial consolidation is a time-honored classic used to advocate tossing out everything from gun laws to taxes: The current rules don't work anyway. As is so often the case, this statement has some truth to it — but entirely misses the point. The development of new financial products and services has indeed blurred the distinction between banks and other financial institutions. For instance, money market accounts offered by securities firms can function much like checking accounts. What's more, despite Congress' inability to deregulate the industry, administrative and judicial rulings in recent years have allowed banks to circumvent existing limits on their activities. The two chief banking regulators — the Federal Reserve and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) — have used a variety of legal loopholes to let banks and bank holding companies into areas such as bond underwriting. (This helps explain how Citicorp racked up $188 million in pretax trading losses in late 1997, thanks largely to the Asian upheaval.) Most recently, a November 1996 decision by the OCC cleared the way for its banks to run subsidiaries engaged in securities underwriting and other services closed to banks themselves. Not to be outdone, one month later the Fed ruled that bank holding companies may control firms that earn as much as 25 percent of their revenues from the securities business. The result was a flurry of prominent banking-brokerage marriages, including NationsBank's $1.2 billion purchase of Montgomery Securities and Bankers Trust's $1.7 billion buyout of Alex Brown. Also in '96, a Supreme Court ruling dismantled many of the barriers keeping banks out of the insurance field. "Since then," reported *The American Banker* this January, "negotiations for mergers and joint ventures between banks and insurers have skyrocketed.... [A] consultant at [Risk Management Services] said he expects half of all banks to be selling insurance by year-end."

But just because banks have had their powers expanded an inch does not mean we need to give them a mile. If anything, the fact that the old laws are widely considered inadequate to deal with the changing financial landscape suggests that what we need are better regulations, not weaker ones. Otherwise, we may soon find ourselves choking on the words of Joseph Stiglitz, senior vice president and chief economist of the World Bank, in his Oct. 31 piece in *The New York Times*: "Inadequate oversight, not over-regulation, caused these problems. Consequently, our emphasis should not be on deregulation, but on finding the right regulatory regime to re-establish stability and confidence." Stiglitz was, of course, referring to the banking crisis in Asia, but if the shoe fits ...

Sadly, deregulators' optimism knows no bounds, and financial consolidation is only Step 1 on the agenda. Congress also aims to do away with prohibitions on banks' owning, or being owned by, nonfinancial commercial firms. Under such an open system, Bill Gates could buy himself a couple of federally insured banks and go into the lending business. Of course, as banks establish ties to unrelated and unfamiliar industries, the risk to the economy is compounded and the possibility for conflicts of interest explodes. If Microsoft owns a bank, for example, and a competing software developer applies for a business loan, who can say for certain that the parent company's interests won't color the bank's lending judgment? In such a case, would we really want to bank on Bill "thumb your nose at the federal anti-trust suit" Gates'

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respect for healthy competition?

Here again, Congress doesn't need hypothetical models to foresee potential problems. In addition to the crisis in Asia, the mixture of banking and commerce has caused trouble in France (Credit Lyonnais), Spain (Banesto), and Germany (Deutsche Bank). In February 1997, the Congressional Research Service reported: "Once viewed as a growth mechanism, German universal banking seems to be troubled by characteristics of private-insider transaction." Similarly, Brookings Institution banking expert Martin Mayer noted in a March '97 *Wall Street Journal* piece on banking deregulation in France, Spain, Sweden, and Finland that "... in every one of these countries that opted for a more 'universal bank,' the outcome was the same: failed big banks, money-losing nonfinancial subsidiaries, huge bills to the taxpayer ... and direct government intervention in the businesses these banks had bought and mismanaged."

But what about keeping banks competitive through new "profit centers"? In a May 1997 statement to the House Banking Committee, the General Accounting Office's chief economist, James Bothwell, reported: "GAO found that the potential benefits of mixing banking and commerce generally lacked empirical support or could be realized without removing the current restrictions. GAO's work also indicated that eliminating the current separation could pose a variety of risks to the safety and soundness of the financial system, the deposit insurance funds, and to consumers and taxpayers." Hardly a glowing recommendation.

House Banking Committee Chairman James Leach is somewhat more emphatic: "Mixing commerce and banking simply doesn't fit our kind of democracy," Leach told fellow committee members last March. In a more recent statement he challenged: "[I]t should be clear there is no public support, no compelling public policy rationale, and no political necessity for such a breach. Indeed, the Congress would risk public scorn if it were to endorse a policy which would lead to conglomeration of ownership of assets in America, as well as an expansion of the deposit insurance safety net to commercial activities."

Unfortunately for Chairman Leach, who introduced H.R. 10 as a pure financial consolidation bill, both versions under consideration were amended to allow for the commingling of banking and commerce. At present, the bill would limit the percentage of a banking company's income that could come from nonfinancial activities. But such limits have a way of expanding over time. What's more, any legislation approved by the House would then pass through the kingdom of Senate Banking Chairman and deregulation cowboy Alfonse D'Amato, whose own "modernization" bill aims to do away with all restrictions on mixing banking and commerce.

The Trouble With Inaction

There is some good news in all of this: It probably ain't gonna happen — at least not this year. Despite all of the cheerleading over H.R. 10, Congress has tried to pass similar legislation at least a half dozen times in the last 10 years — and failed in as many tries. It seems that, as is the case with so many legislative matters, the devil is in the details: Although most of the major players agree on the broad outlines of a bill, conflict among the bankers, brokers, insurers, and even regulators over the particulars (and Congress' unwillingness to alienate any of these influential groups) promises to drag out the process a while longer. And no matter how close to success the "modernization" effort came in 1997, 1998 is an election year, and members of Congress — including Senator D'Amato, who's up for re-election in November — are loath to risk losing the financial largesse of either the American Bankers Association or the American Insurance Association. Already, D'Amato has tried to distance himself from the issue, announcing that he won't waste any more time hawking comprehensive reform until the House manages to pass a bill.

Now back to the bad news: Something really should be done to address the ongoing evolution of our financial sector. In recent years, reviews by the GAO found that the current financial regulatory system isn't really equipped to deal with existing institutions, much less "modernized" ones. Moreover, the piecemeal approach to deregulation being taken by the Fed and the OCC only makes things worse, resulting in "overlaps, anomalies, and even some gaps" in oversight, according to James Bothwell's May '97 testimony.

In fact, GAO data indicate that it's the regulators we should be pushing to consolidate, rather than the financial sector. At present, each branch of the financial tree has its own complex set of oversight requirements, resulting in a system that is fragmented, inefficient, and flat-out confusing. Banks can choose to operate under either a national charter (regulated by the OCC) or a state charter (issued by state banking commissions and overseen by either the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. or the Federal Reserve). The Fed also regulates bank holding companies, umbrella corporations that operate banks, while the Office of Thrift Supervision oversees the S&Ls. Regulation of

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the insurance industry, on the other hand, is left up to the individual states. As for the securities business, although guidelines for fair trading practices are set and monitored by the Securities and Exchange Commission, the health of individual firms is not regulated.

Everyone clear on that? Don't feel bad. Neither, it seems, are the regulators. Under the present system, some activities and firms get double or triple oversight, while others slip through the cracks. In a March 1994 statement to the House Banking Committee, the GAO's then-comptroller general, Charles Bowsher, reported that banks were receiving contradictory advice from regulators concerning lending practices and that "[a]lthough the regulators try to coordinate their supervision and examination functions, this effort is not always successful and questions of accountability arise." Take the case of the failed Bank of New England: The OCC was responsible for the lead bank, while the Fed was responsible for the bank's holding company and the major expansion program it undertook in the late '80s. Each focusing on its own regulatory realm, neither the OCC nor the Fed took action to control the combination of risky loans and too-rapid growth that ultimately overwhelmed the bank. Which regulator should have stepped in to prevent the crash? As Comptroller of the Currency Eugene Ludwig told Congress in 1994, "it is never entirely clear which agency is responsible for problems created by a faulty or overly burdensome or late regulation."

Among other advantages, giving each arm of the financial sector one chief overseer might put an end to the ongoing turf wars, especially those among the banking regulators. Currently, the desire to keep banks happy and prevent "charter swapping" can lead to what has been elegantly termed "a competition in laxity," whereby one agency extends certain freedoms to the institutions it oversees, prompting other agencies to counter with similar, or even more liberal, allowances. When the OCC gave the go-ahead in '96 for national banks to start selling insurance, for example, Florida's banking commission promptly gave state-chartered banks the OK as well. And don't think it coincidence that the Fed's December '96 decision to loosen the reins on bank holding companies came so close on the heels of the OCC's November ruling.

Alternatively, an umbrella agency could be formed to monitor the system as a whole, as was proposed early in Clinton's first term. As James Bothwell told the House Banking Committee: "Our work on past financial institution failures has shown the importance of having an umbrella supervisory authority to assess how risks to insured institutions may be affected by risks in the other components of a holding company structure." Not surprisingly, this proposal is embraced by neither the regulators, who don't want to risk their current powers, nor the banks, who stand to benefit from their overseers' war of concessions. As a result, the Clinton administration dropped the issue early on, explains Treasury Undersecretary John Hawke, out of concern that further debate would only impede "the cause of modernization."

But it may be that the modernization "cause" *should* be impeded. No one seems particularly interested in improving the existing regulatory system, so much as loosening it up in the name of competitiveness. Certainly we want U.S. banks to remain strong both abroad and at home, but there is no impending crisis to justify deregulation before a solid, updated oversight system can also be put into place. (In fact, 1996 marked the banking industry's fifth consecutive year of record earnings.) And the people busy pooh-poohing the potential risks of "modernization" should consider the recent comments of former GAO chief Charles Bowsher to *The New York Times*: "In the early 1980s the U.S. confused deregulation with supervision, and the same thing happened in Asia."

Just something to chew on the next time you're waiting in line at the ATM.

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The Man Behind Prop 209

Ward Connerly's latest crusade challenges the easy assumptions about him

BY LOUIS FREEDBERG

EVER SINCE WARD CONNERLY emerged as a leader in the fight to end affirmative action, he has had to fend off a stream of insults that might have sunk someone with a thinner skin.

Uncle Tom. House slave. Puppet of the white man. Traitor to his race. Minority counterrevolutionary. These are just some of the labels Connerly's many critics in California and around the nation have hurled in his direction. But none prepared the Sacramento businessman and regent of the University of California for the vitriol unleashed by his support last November for the university's proposal to extend health benefits to partners of its gay employees. The reaction, he says, has been even more extreme than the one prompted by his crusade against affirmative action, or as Connerly prefers to call it, racial preferences. "On race, at least you can sit down and talk with people," says Connerly, who led the successful campaign in support of Proposition 209, the initiative banning affirmative action programs in California. "Blacks will get in your face and get angry with you, but the level of debate doesn't begin to compare with this one. People start talking about morals, the Bible, degenerates, and before you know it, you're off in a terrible debate in which you just can't reason with people."

Until the university's vote last fall, Connerly had been routinely vilified by supporters of affirmative action (mostly left-of-center Democrats) — and virtually canonized by affirmative action critics (mostly right-of-center Republicans). But his support for domestic-partner benefits has begun to erode the one-dimensional views each side may have held of him.

LOUIS FREEDBERG *is a correspondent in the* San Francisco Chronicle's *Washington bureau.*

The Gathering Storm

It is only in the last few years of this decade that domestic-partner benefits have become a ubiquitous part of the American workplace. In 1982 the *Village Voice* became the first employer to offer these benefits to its gay employees; by 1990 fewer than a half dozen more employers had joined the alternative news weekly. Today, however, such benefits are offered by hundreds of universities (including Harvard, Yale, and Stanford), local governments (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles), and private employers (Microsoft, Shell Oil, Wells Fargo Bank).

The University of California, however, had lagged far behind not only other leading employers in the state, but most comparable universities as well. Richard Atkinson, the university's president, told the board of regents that the lack of domestic partner benefits had "affected its ability to recruit and retain the most qualified faculty, staff, and graduate students."

In the months leading up to the regents' tumultuous meeting, Connerly emerged as an unlikely champion of the benefits package. It passed by a razor-thin 13-12 margin. Gay rights advocates were ecstatic because of its symbolic importance: The University of California, with nine campuses, 166,000 students, and 127,000 employees, is the nation's largest institution of higher education. Few believe that the policy could have passed without Connerly's support.

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In the weeks following the meeting, Connerly was bombarded by letters and faxes lambasting his vote. "I am utterly appalled that you, of all people, would vote in favor of spending taxpayers' money to subsidize the unnatural, unhealthy, and degenerate behavior of homosexuals," wrote Paul Henry, an attorney from Chico, Calif., in a missive typical of dozens that Connerly received. "Equally perverse is that by doing so, you have cast your vote to undermine the sanctity of marriage. The family as defined by Scriptures is the fundamental unit of society. No society which has accommodated homosexuality has survived!"

Connerly immediately penned an unambiguous response. "It always astounds me that those with bigoted tendencies such as yours invoke the Scripture to support their bigotry," Connerly wrote. "I am part of an interracial marriage. When my wife and I married, there were those who said that such unions were immoral, unnatural, contrary to the Bible, and would lead to the deterioration of civilization. ... The ignorance and nonsense about interracial marriages 35 years ago is just as absurd today with reference to sexual orientation."

Connerly says his views on the issue simply reflect a libertarian philosophy opposing government infringement on personal liberties. "I'm not an advocate of homosexuality, but I happen to believe that as long as someone is doing something that isn't harming anyone, it is really none of my business." He even evokes the Declaration of Independence to defend his position: "What is more sacred to your pursuit of happiness than to live with whomever you want?" he asks. "Your pursuit of happiness means doing it on your terms, not society's terms."

Connerly insists that there is no contradiction between his views on affirmative action and benefits for gay employees. "Just as it is wrong for us to discriminate against white people and Asians when we give others preferences, it is wrong for us to treat gays differently just because of their sexual orientation." And, he says, granting benefits to gay employees makes sound business sense. "I believe we gain a productive workforce by having people in nurturing relationships, having them in families, having them go home at the end of the day and having someone they can spend the evening with, whether it is watching TV, listening to the radio, playing chess or ping-pong, or whatever they want to do, and coming back to work the next day, refueled and ready to do the university's business. I don't care whom they go home to."

Connerly also notes that his own unusual background has made him more tolerant of families that don't fit the traditional mold. "I came from what they would regard as a dysfunctional family. My father left when I was two, my mother died when I was four, I was raised by an aunt and an uncle and a grandmother. I would have preferred to live in a traditional family, but like so many other American families I did not have that choice."

Estranged Bedfellows

Connerly's support for domestic-partner benefits has scrambled traditional political alliances. "I welcome his extraordinarily focused determination to advance the policy," says Democratic state Assemblywoman Carole Migden, a former San Francisco supervisor and one of the most prominent lesbians in state politics. "It is a testament to progress and forward thinking."

"Logic and business sense have prevailed," says Kim Mills of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay advocacy organization. "His conclusion on domestic-partner benefits and treating people equally is something we are all looking for."

By contrast, some of those who once hailed him as a hero are having second thoughts. "Connerly is way off the mark on this one," says Robert Knight, director of cultural studies for the Family Research Council, a leading conservative organization in Washington. "No true conservative would equate homosexual households with marriages, because we believe that without marriage and family as paramount values, hell will break loose."

And the Rev. Lou Sheldon, head of the Traditional Values Coalition in Anaheim and a prominent conservative on the Christian right, accused Connerly and the dozen other regents who sided with him of being seduced by the argument that discrimination against gays is of the same order as racial discrimination. "They believed the big lie that homosexuality is equivalent to being black, Hispanic, or Asian," says Sheldon. "But race is an immutable characteristic, while homosexuality is a behavior-based lifestyle. It is not a normal function, it is a dysfunctional behavior, and to reward people for that kind of lifestyle is wholly inappropriate and immoral."

What made Connerly's stance especially galling to some supporters is that his main antagonist on the benefits issue was none other than Gov. Pete Wilson, his closest ally in the drive to end affirmative action. It was Wilson who appointed Connerly to the university's governing board in 1993. Together, Wilson and Connerly pushed through a resolution ending the use of race and gender in university admissions, hir-

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ing, and contracts in July 1995. Wilson later asked Connerly to take over the helm of a floundering campaign on behalf of Prop 209, which extended the university's ban on affirmative action to all public agencies in California. Wilson and Connerly together campaigned for the measure — which easily passed by a 54-46 percent margin.

But on the issue of domestic-partner benefits for gays, Wilson and Connerly were poles apart. Wilson led a very public campaign to defeat the policy. His central argument mirrored the position of far-right organizations. "A policy or practice of a state agency that accords equivalent status and benefits to a relationship less than marriage cannot avoid devaluing marriage and the vitality of that most important institution in the care and upbringing of children," Wilson wrote to Richard Atkinson just two days before the vote. "No other state agency of California offers such benefits to unmarried companions. Private institutions are free to do so if they choose, but they are also free to uphold the status and protection of marriage."

By normal political rules, Wilson, who is the ex-officio president of the university's board of regents, should easily have prevailed. He appointed 18 of the board's 26 members. The remainder are either representatives of alumni and faculty organizations, or elected officials, who, like Wilson, don't usually participate in university affairs. But Connerly and four other Wilson appointees, as well as virtually all of the elected officials on the board, provided enough votes to usher in the new policy. The board in the end voted to offer only health benefits to same-sex partners of its employees, the most limited benefits package available. It rejected other options, including married student housing, and pension and retirement benefits. Nonetheless, the passage of even this limited policy was an embarrassing defeat for the governor.

Sean Walsh, a Wilson spokesman, says the governor continues to believe that Connerly and other regents voted "with their hearts and not their minds." He downplayed reports that after Connerly broke ranks with Wilson he was snubbed by some of the governor's aides. "Clearly, the governor and his staff would have preferred to have seen Ward and other regents vote to deny domestic-partner benefits, and clearly some of the staff were not happy with the outcome, but that was simply a matter of frustration about not being able to deliver on your boss's political agenda." Now, he insists, there is no ill will between Wilson and Connerly, who have been friends for 30 years. "Their friendship far transcends one vote over a policy disagreement," says Walsh.

It is too soon to know whether Connerly's support for a key item on the gay rights agenda will damage his standing as the nation's leading — and so far most effective — critic of affirmative action. "For some people, it obviously is going to undermine his support," says David Boaz, vice president of the libertarian Cato Institute. "But I hope those people will be so committed to the goal of eliminating preferences in public policy that they will continue to work with him."

That so far seems to be the case. Connerly says a handful of small donors to the American Civil Rights Institute, the organization he founded to spread his anti-affirmative action message to other states, have threatened to withhold contributions but that large donors are still firmly behind him. And he is still a hero in most conservative circles in Washington. In late January, he was the keynote speaker at a gala dinner for the Conservative Political Action Committee, where he was introduced by Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell, the lead sponsor of anti-affirmative action legislation in the Senate.

If anything, Connerly believes, his status has been enhanced by the latest controversy. "It says I am not some knee-jerk person out to exclude everyone, but in my tent there is room for everyone." He adds, "Those on the real, real far right who seat themselves in the Bible, they are never going to modify their view. Those who are just ideological conservatives, but not the real Bible-thumping types, they have made their peace with my domestic-partners vote. Some of them have begun to say to me, 'Intellectually we think you're right, we just have a hard time going there.'"

He has this advice for his critics: "Don't disparage other forms of family, because they can be just as nurturing and produce just as productive kids as [traditional] forms of family. Just recognize the reality of life as we live it, rather than as you would like it to be."

Connerly's name has been floated as a possible opponent of Sen. Barbara Boxer, the California Democrat who is up for re-election this November. But he says he is not interested, mainly because he is not willing to sacrifice his principles on the altar of electoral victory. That is probably just as well. Were he to run, he would surely do so without the support of the most conservative elements of his party, who will probably never forgive him for his support of a key element in the gay rights agenda.

That is a prospect that does not seem to disturb Connerly in the slightest. ●

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Memo *of the* Month

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August 25, 1997

James B. Hunt, Governor
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Office of the Governor
Raleigh, NC 27603-8001

Dear Governor Hunt,

I have waited to write to see your decision about the DOT and Wildlife appointments. We have never had anything like this to happen before.

Attached is a copy of a letter that was mailed to Jim Bennett. It explains what happened and the promise you, Garland, and Jim made. Jim told us several times that Allen would get the Wildlife appointment and I would get the DOT appointment. Jim denies this, but this promise was made to three (3) of us. I understand that Mr. R. C. Soles Jr. stopped both of these appointments. When I read in the Wilmington paper that Michael Mills was going on the DOT, I lost all confidence in the system.

Each of you misrepresented the truth to us. We gave money and would have given more if you would have asked. We gave you the money and have supported you all through your career. We are very disappointed and feel that our money should be returned.

Sincerely,

J. A. Cartrette

J. A. Cartrette

Attachment

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After the Abortion

By ceding the counseling role to pro-lifers, pro-choicers may be doing their cause more harm than good

BY JONATHAN DUBE

A STONE STATUE OF JESUS CHRIST cradling a child stood before the mourners. Brenda Heyworth clutched the knit baby hat and little white booties she had bought for her son, whom she lost before she ever got to know. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she sank her high heels into Woodlawn Cemetery's moist soil, muddied from the morning's rain.

"Dear Jordan," the 42-year-old read slowly from a handwritten letter, taking deep breaths to maintain her composure. "I want you to know that I have always longed to hold you in my arms. That longing will only be fulfilled when we meet in heaven. Please forgive me, and if you can, help me to forgive myself. The knowledge that I ended your life is almost more than I can bear. If I could make the decision today, I would do it differently. It was the worst mistake and worst sin in my life. If I hadn't allowed myself to be deceived, our lives or our deaths would have been different, in our Lord's hands. I love you." Her sobbing nearly overwhelmed her as she read her signature: "Your Mother."

For Brenda Heyworth, the memorial service was the beginning of the end of the grieving process. For 22 years she had lived with the guilt of having sacrificed her son's life for personal reasons when she chose to abort her pregnancy. "I hated myself," Heyworth says. "It hurt so bad emotionally I couldn't deal with it." So when she learned of a post-abortion counseling program near her home in Joliet, Ill., she sought help.

Heyworth is one of thousands of women each year who turn to such programs to deal with the lingering emotional effects of abortion. Dozens of groups dedicated to post-abortion counseling have sprung up around the country in the past decade, which is hardly surprising considering 1.4 million women terminate pregnancies each year. What is surprising, however, is that these counselors are not affiliated with abortion clinics or family planning agencies. In fact, they aren't even pro-choice. With names such as Women Exploited By Abortion and American Victims of Abortion, these groups firmly believe abortion is immoral, yet spend their time counseling women who have chosen to abort.

At the same time, the people one might expect to offer this type of counseling — those dedicated to abortion rights and women's health issues — rarely provide such services. Pro-choice groups maintain that such programs do more harm than good, and claim they're unnecessary because studies show that abortion causes women little psychological harm. But behind this ambivalence lies a deeper, political motive: Pro-choice advocates fear that, by counseling women who have had abortions, they would be acknowledging that abortions can, in fact, cause depression and emotional trauma — and thus arm the pro-life camp. But by refusing to move beyond the political rhetoric, pro-choice advocates are in some ways abandoning the very women whose rights they claim to champion.

The Politics of Grief

At the heart of the post-abortion counseling issue is an intensely politicized debate over the psychological effects of abortion. Nowadays, one can find studies to back up any side of any cause, so it's not surprising that the right has a truckload of research demonstrating abortion's negative psychological effects, while the left has just as many studies proving those effects are negligible. Pro-choicers maintain that the most common reaction to abortion is relief, because the procedure ends a stressful unwanted pregnancy.

JONATHAN DUBE *is a reporter at* The Charlotte *(N.C.)* Observer.

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Pro-life advocates, on the other hand, cite evidence for what they call post-abortion stress or "Post-Abortion Syndrome," whose symptoms are said to include abortion flashbacks, relationship problems, guilt, severe depression, low self-esteem, substance abuse, and even suicidal tendencies. They point to a 1985 doctoral dissertation by University of Minnesota psychologist Anne Speckhard, who compared post-abortion stress to the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that afflicts many Vietnam veterans. Many women, wrote Speckhard, suffer flashbacks and hallucinations, while others report intense nightmares related to the experience, such as images of discarded fetuses in garbage heaps or babies trying to locate their mother.

The debate over abortion's psychological impact surfaced as a political issue in the late 1980s. As pro-life groups realized they were losing the abortion battle on legal grounds, they began trying to scare women away from the procedure by painting it as a threat to women's health, both physically and psychologically. At the urging of such groups, in 1987 President Reagan asked then-Surgeon General C. Everett Koop to produce a report on the medical and psychological impact of abortion. Koop reviewed more than 200 studies on the subject. But upon completing the report in January 1989, he refused to release it, saying that the research in the area was too flawed for him to draw any solid conclusions. "At this time, the available scientific evidence ... simply cannot support either the preconceived beliefs of those pro-life or those pro-choice," Koop wrote in a letter to Reagan.

Since Koop refused to release his findings, the American Psychological Association created a panel to produce its own report. The panel examined the same studies Koop had and in April 1990 concluded that while "some women experience severe distress or psychopathology after abortion and require sympathetic care ... the development of significant psychological problems related to abortion is minuscule from a public health perspective." Pro-life groups criticized the findings as politically biased because the members of the APA panel were pro-choice. They also said that studies done by pro-choicers are flawed because they're based on interviews with women within weeks of their abortions, whereas most symptoms of post-abortion stress don't appear until months or years later, because women repress their pain at first.

To address this flaw in the research, Koop called for a long-term, multimillion-dollar national study of the issue. But Reagan soon left office, and the issue was forgotten. Pro-life researchers believe Koop's request fell victim to politics, accusing pro-choice advocates of suppressing information that shows the negative effects of abortion. "Since they already have the political advantage so to speak, they're better off not to see the study done at all," says David Reardon, director of the pro-life Elliot Institute in Springfield, Ill. Pro-choice researchers counter that such a study would simply be a waste of resources. "Frankly, I think most researchers don't think it's an important enough question because there's so little evidence of it," says psychiatrist Nancy Adler, the lead author of the APA report. "Given that 1.5 million women have abortions every year, if there were such a thing as post-abortion syndrome, you would expect that the doors of mental health professionals would be being broken down."

But just because a woman doesn't suffer from an actual "syndrome" doesn't mean an abortion hasn't caused her grief. Even some studies by pro-choice researchers indicate that women often have difficulty coping with abortion. One of the studies cited by the APA panel, for example, found that 17 percent of women felt guilt after the procedure. A more neutral 1989 survey by the *Los Angeles Times* found that 56 percent of women experienced "a sense of guilt about having had an abortion," and 26 percent said they "mostly regret the abortion." Perhaps most significantly, even Planned Parenthood acknowledges in its abortion fact sheet that up to 10 percent of women experience "depression of a lingering nature."

"There is, with a pregnancy, the possibility of a human life," says Nada Stotland, a pro-choice Chicago psychiatrist who has testified in court as an expert on this issue. "And when that possibility is then wiped out, it's a loss. It's always a loss. I think feelings of grief are universal, but that's not a syndrome."

Still, relying just on Planned Parenthood's figure, we can safely estimate that, with 1.4 million abortions performed each year, up to 140,000 women will experience "lingering" depression. This may be a minority of those who have abortions, but it is hardly a "minuscule" number. Certainly, it's enough to warrant the need for post-abortion counseling.

The Counseling Wars

Seeing political opportunity, pro-life advocates have opened their arms to these women, launching dozens of post-abortion counseling programs across the country, including ones run by the National Right-to-Life Committee and the Catholic dioceses. In 1994, the far-right Focus on the Family went so far as to sponsor a national post-abortion recovery summit, where many of these groups met and discussed their various counseling methods.

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The philosophy behind the pro-life counseling is that abortion is a death experience that men and women need help resolving. Counselors say the people involved suffer pain, depression, and unresolved grief — all magnified because they suffer silently. Thus the healing process requires individuals to acknowledge that a death has occurred and that grieving and forgiveness of their "sin" are necessary. In order to heal, the theory goes, a woman must personify the "baby" and accept its death before she can move on. That is why most recovery programs end by having the woman name the child and hold a memorial service.

Brenda Heyworth says her memorial service for Jordan—the culmination of a 10-step recovery process run by Victims of Choice—was the key to unlocking her grief. "It was very emotional, and it was very difficult at the time, but looking back at it, it was very necessary," says Heyworth. "Without it, there would be no sense of closure." Heyworth believes the Victims of Choice counseling program has made her a better person, helping her regain control of her feelings and her life. "The most horrible thing is to really sit down and talk about it and face it honestly and realize that as a mother, you killed your child," says Heyworth, who still cries when recalling her abortion experience. "I had to feel all that pain before I could get beyond. It's not as though the pain is gone or I don't think about it, but I don't hate myself like I did."

The AAA Women's Services in Chattanooga, Tenn., a pro-life organization, has taken the mourning idea a step further by dedicating the National Memorial for the Unborn, a 50-foot black granite wall surrounded by a small garden and a "pool of tears." So far, more than 400 women from around the country have placed brass name plates on the wall to memorialize their aborted children.

Many pro-choice advocates accuse pro-life counseling groups of being politically motivated, saying they only counsel the women to make them feel guilty and use them as evidence of abortion's harmful effects. "I think sometimes those women are exploited, because so often those groups are trying to harness the women's pain for political purposes," says Ann Baker, who has been the director for counseling for 20 years at Hope Clinic for Women in Granite City, Ill. "They will suggest they go on TV shows and that they get really politically active and get out on the sidewalks and start screaming to other women how they had their abortions and were destroyed by it. I think that's really exploitive. That isn't to me good counseling."

Pro-life groups deny such accusations. "We're there simply to say, 'All right, you've been there, this is what's done, this is what's happened to you, now what are you going to do with it?'" says Victims of Choice director Elizabeth Verchio. Besides, she adds, just because many women who complete counseling elect to speak out against abortion does not mean the counseling is politically motivated.

The programs' politics aside, many psychiatrists are concerned that the counseling methods used are harmful to women because they encourage feelings of guilt. "I think to have a place for women who are having feelings post-abortion is very important," says Adler, a professor of psychiatry at the University of California at San Francisco. "But if it's run by a political group, I would be concerned that it would be fostering guilt. If the same groups that are trying to prove that post-abortion trauma syndrome exists say, 'Well, you must be experiencing trauma,' it may increase the likelihood that the women will experience it."

But if they're so concerned about the ulterior motives of pro-lifers, why aren't pro-choice advocates working to bring women an alternative? At present, post-abortion counseling remains almost exclusively in the hands of abortion opponents. The only listings for such counseling found in searches of telephone books and the Internet were for programs run by pro-lifers. Planned Parenthood of New York City had no information on the subject, but suggested calling the Women's Health Line, which referred the call to the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. A counselor there said they didn't offer post-abortion counseling, but suggested the Karen Horney women's clinic. The clinic had no post-abortion services or information to offer, and suggested calling Planned Parenthood. "I've been trying to find places where we can refer people that would be appropriate and helpful, but there's not a lot out there," says Vicki Breitbart, the director of clinical education for Planned Parenthood of NYC. "We haven't found anything so far."

The situation is similar across the country. "Most clinics will say, 'We have a volunteer staff to do our counseling, we do decision-making counseling, we do birth-control counseling, but that's all we do, and that's all we can do,'" says Ava Torre-Bueno, a psychotherapist who served as director of counseling for Planned Parenthood of San Diego for 10 years. Some clinics do require follow-up visits after abortions, but primarily for physical check-ups.

Many pro-choicers will privately acknowledge the potential value of post-abortion counseling, but feel the political risks are too high to make it a public priority. "It would be nice if we could talk more about

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it, but unfortunately the anti-choice groups make that scary to do," says Stotland. "Those of us who are in favor of choice have learned to be very hyper, because there are groups so patently, overtly ready to jump on any data and misuse it, to use it to convince legislatures to decrease access or legality. So it's very hard for any pro-choice-oriented professionals to work up a head of steam for organizing services when the data might be taken out of context the next second."

And so, having fought for so long to define the abortion debate in terms of legal rights and clinical procedures, pro-choicers have essentially ceded the moral and human aspects of the issue to the pro-life camp. In fact, even admitting that abortion can be emotionally difficult is considered anti-feminist. Author Naomi Wolf, whose feminist credentials are hard to question, was accused of betraying her sex after she argued in an October 1995 issue of *The New Republic* that abortion-rights backers are guilty of "self-delusions, fibs, and evasions" and that "the death of a fetus is a real death."

The politics behind the dearth of counseling options gives little comfort to women who need help. Two years after her abortion, 24-year-old Andrea still suffers feelings of grief and guilt. "I have been trying to find a support group for women who have experienced abortions," she says, "but so far the only one I have found is by one of those Crisis Pregnancy Centers, with a rather judgmental and religious base, which is not really what I am looking for. These are the same people that offer free pregnancy testing but then make you watch a propaganda film about abortion, and I don't believe that is right."

Pro-choice advocate Torre-Bueno agrees and wants women's groups to seize the issue back from the grasp of pro-lifers. After encountering many women who needed help coping with post-abortion emotions, Torre-Bueno left Planned Parenthood to counsel such women herself. Torre-Bueno doesn't believe steps like memorial services are necessary in order for women to heal. All that's needed, she says, is for a counselor to guide the individual and give her permission to grieve. Many women feel as though they have no right to grieve since they made the decision to have the abortion, she explains. "Women come to me saying, 'I chose to do this, therefore I have no right to grieve.' My question is, 'Who says?' You can choose it, and you can grieve. These are feelings."

Torre-Bueno recently wrote a book on how to cope with the emotional after-effects of abortion, and has been teaching post-abortion counseling workshops at family-planning clinics around the country. "My real mission in life is to help make people in family planning recognize that some women have difficulty after an abortion and that we can help them." says Torre-Bueno. "And to make them realize doing so is in no way contrary to being an abortion provider, to being pro-choice."

One prominent women's advocate who shares Torre-Bueno's beliefs is Naomi Wolf. Wolf suggests that offering post-abortion counseling could not only help individuals, but actually advance the pro-choice cause. "I think it would be, among other things, a public relations coup, because ... the sense of this being a conveyor belt or an assembly line would be done away with," says Wolf. "The sense of there being a compassionate embrace of the whole woman in the entirety of the trauma would be much greater. I think that that's why people turn against the pro-choice movement, because they are not sure that there's a compassionate heart encompassing the situation for every woman. I think that the gratitude that women would show for an organization that was there for them that way after the abortion would be strong."

For now, Wolf and Torre-Bueno hold the minority opinion on this issue, but there are signs that may change. Just last year, Torre-Bueno was asked to hold a workshop on post-abortion counseling at the National Abortion Federation conference. "I hope we can get to the point where we can address this issue," she says, "and have post-abortion care be just another part of taking care of our clients. Just think, if a woman got an infection after an abortion, we would have her pumped so full of antibiotics it wouldn't be funny. And I think that the thinking has got to shift so we can see psychological problems in the same light."

Because abortion is such a sensitive political issue, it may indeed be difficult for pro-choice advocates to discuss its psychological impact truthfully without opponents pouncing. But by ceding the post-abortion counseling issue to the pro-life activists, pro-choicers risk positioning themselves as interested only in the politics of the abortion issue, rather than in the needs of the people it affects. As things stand, women in need of support after an abortion may be inclined to either repress their problems, creating the potential for bigger trouble down the road, or turn to one of the many pro-life groups that offer such aid. Clearly, it's impossible to predict whether, as Wolf suggests, offering post-abortion counseling options would actually advance the pro-choice cause. But it would certainly help the women the movement claims to represent, many of whom now suffer in silence. ●

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Beyond Racial Preferences

A handful of programs are showing that there is life after affirmative action

BY ROBERT WORTH

LAST DECEMBER, AT HIS NATIONAL town meeting on race relations in Akron, Ohio, President Clinton had finally agreed to listen to critics of affirmative action. "Americans believe in affirmative action," said Abigail Thernstrom, a demure middle-aged author with silver hair. "They don't believe in preferences." Clinton, never one to miss a sound bite, thrust his oversized microphone into Thernstrom's face: "Abigail, do you favor the U.S. Army abolishing the affirmative action program that produced Colin Powell? Yes or no? Yes or no?"

Clinton seemed to think he had scored a home run. But what does Powell say about how he got ahead? "I benefited from equal opportunity," the general wrote in his 1994 autobiography, "... but I was not shown preference. The Army, as a matter of fairness, made sure that performance would be the only measure of advancement."

Instead of stumping for racial preferences, Clinton should focus on the words Powell used: equal opportunity. Because like it or not, preference programs are collapsing like rotten timber in school boards and courthouses across the country. The Supreme Court recently refused to hear a challenge to California's ballot initiative banning race and gender preferences, Proposition 209. In fact, the court has been moving slowly but surely towards a ruling in favor of Title VII's original meaning: Race and gender discrimination is illegal, unless it is intended as a remedy for specific prior injustice.

Many liberals would deplore this ruling as a return to segregation. But the fact that Bill Cosby's children still have a government-sponsored advantage over those of a white welfare mother makes most voters furious. A recent study published by Harvard University Press found that the mere mention of affirmative action inspires racial animosity in whites. Thirty years after Martin Luther King's stirring call for a color-blind society, the persistence of racial quotas strikes most Americans as an insult to his legacy.

Nor has affirmative action really helped those it was meant for. "Preferential treatment," writes essayist Shelby Steele, "no matter how it is justified in the light of day, subjects blacks to a midnight of self-doubt, and so often transforms their advantage into a revolving door." At mostly white campuses, the dropout rate for blacks and Hispanics is five times the rate for whites. In the workplace, preference programs brand minorities and women as mere tokens, and they may well help to maintain the "glass ceiling" on minority promotions that they were designed to remedy. Even their most ardent defenders admit that preference programs have done little or nothing for the truly disadvantaged black poor.

Worst of all, affirmative action has sucked away political support for need-based programs that would address the most glaring realities of unequal opportunity. Almost one in four American children under six years old is living in poverty today, a vastly disproportionate number of them black and Hispanic, but the programs that might give them a fair start in life are still underfunded. It's not just the schools that are bad; some children never even get that far. "Some of our families have talked about putting out their lights at night, and crawling through certain rooms, because they were afraid of being shot," says Dr. Mary Jo Ward, director of the Heads Up Literacy Project at New York Hospital. "They can't go for a quart of milk, because they're afraid of never coming back." Those aren't exactly ideal conditions for learning to read and write.

Americans don't believe in racial preferences, but they do believe in giving a hand to kids who live in constant fear of being shot. Now that preferences are all but gone, it's time to start focusing again on the pro-

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COVER ART BY RENEE WINFIELD

grams that will help to create something like a level playing field for all young people by the time they're 18. In effect, that will mean helping out a lot of minority children — not because we want the world to look like an ad for the United Colors of Benetton, but because we believe in equal opportunity. And as it happens, the institution that produced Colin Powell — the U.S. Army — has been leading the way.

Buffalo Soldiers

Most people know that the Army has been one of the great sources of opportunity for African-Americans, but few understand that it doesn't actually practice racial preferences. Instead, it seeks out promising young minority and low-income kids and enrolls them in aggressive, boot camp-style remedial programs — an example civilian schools and employers would do well to heed. Consider, for instance, the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS) in Eatontown, N.J. Established in 1916, USMAPS' rigorous 10-month program is designed to bring promising but low-scoring candidates up to speed for West Point, which is still the Army's most prestigious source of commissions. Because blacks score on average almost 200 points lower on the SAT than whites, USMAPS has become an indispensable pipeline for bringing them into the officer corps. Some "prepsters" are enlisted men and women, others are high school graduates who have been identified as promising by recruiters. On entering the prep school's gray cinder-block compound, everyone gets the same rude awakening: reveille at 5:30 a.m., followed by a fierce succession of classes and athletic programs, right up to taps at 11:00 p.m. Classes focus on the basics, English and math, with an unapologetic tracking system: advanced, standard, and fundamentals.

The results speak for themselves. Students who last through the program end up with SAT scores that average 110 points higher than when they started. Enlisted "prepsters" earn higher GPAs at West Point than direct-admits, even though they start out with lower SAT scores and grades. Above all, black prep school graduates have a higher graduation rate from West Point than any other group, despite the fact that outside the military the black college dropout rate is 22 percent higher for blacks than it is for whites.

These numbers would appear to vindicate the prep school's remedial mission, which has allowed West Point to maintain its high percentage of minority cadets without lowering its standards. Nor do the prepsters suffer any stigma when they arrive at the academy. If anything, they're held to a higher standard, thanks to their early taste of military rigor. "You've been given an extra push, so they expect that much more of you," says one graduate. Another cadet recalls: "When I showed up at West Point the squad leader took me aside and said, 'I expect you to help me carry my squad through."

Of course, USMAPS is expensive: between $40,000 and $60,000 a year per student. Some critics also claim that its successes are inseparable from the Army's authoritarian and hierarchical nature, and can't be replicated in the messier world outside. But in fact, some very similar methods have been showing up in one of the oldest and messiest public school systems in the country.

Under Pressure

The Puritan elders who founded the Boston Public Latin School in 1635 never dreamed that it would someday run a "boot camp" for minority applicants. The school's graduates include John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Cotton Mather (Ben Franklin dropped out early to work for his father), and it is still the toughest of Boston's three competitive-entry "exam" schools. Nat Hentoff, who attended five decades ago, remembers it as a melting pot heated by fierce academic standards: "We were all at risk of not making the grade, and that created a bond among youngsters who otherwise were from neighborhoods often engaged in tribal warfare."

But by the '60s the school's lily-white racial composition was in stark contrast to nearby Dorchester, which is poor and mostly black. In 1974 a federal desegregation order forced Boston Latin to modify its admissions process to ensure a 35 percent black and Hispanic student body. Although the failure rate for minorities soon doubled, the policy stood until 1995, when the father of a white girl who had been rejected sued the school board. Instead of fighting the suit, the board admitted the girl and dropped its 35 percent quota in 1996. But its modified preference policy, which was designed to maintain an 18 or 19 percent minority enrollment, has also been challenged (the case is currently in court). "The issue in the current case is whether we value diversity," says Charles Ogletree, a Harvard Law professor who was on the committee that wrote the new policy. "And if we really value diversity it will be reflected in a student body that looks like the Boston public school system."

Maybe so, but the school board isn't counting on it. Boston Latin headmaster Michael Contompasis is putting his hopes into what he calls "academic boot camps" held during the summer between 5th and 6th

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grade, with another week of preparation at the start of the school year, just before the kids take the entrance exam for Boston's three magnet schools. The program runs three hours a day, four days a week through the month of July and part of August. Like USMAPS, it attacks the fundamentals — English and math — and is openly geared towards improving scores.

"We're working under the assumption that all set-asides will be removed," says Mike Danziger, who runs a nonprofit that is working with Boston Latin on a supplementary boot camp that will start running at another local school this summer. "But we're not an affirmative action program; we're open to all kids who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity."

For many of these kids the most important step is just finding someone — anyone — who can point them in the right direction. "There are lots of smart kids in the public schools who just don't have any idea they could go to college," says Joel Vargas, the son of poor Mexican and Chinese immigrants and now a doctoral student at Harvard. Vargas was getting his A's at his local public school when a teacher told him about Summerbridge, a nonprofit that seeks out children from low-income families, puts them through tough after-school programs, and guides them through the bewildering process of applying to competitive schools. In the end, Vargas got a scholarship to a private school, but even afterward, "I needed to be pushed — there were some real gaps in my education. It was a slap in the face to see how far behind I was and how unfair the system was."

For kids who don't have the good luck to get a scholarship to a private school, as Vargas did, the system is even less fair. "To get an education, our kids have to go to one of the exam schools," says Boston School Committee Chairman Liz Reilinger. With only three exam schools and a student population of over 63,000, the odds for success are pretty bad. "What makes this unique is that you have a different responsibility at this level," says Contompasis. "Students at the University of Texas law school [where another landmark preference program was struck down] are going to get in someplace. The question for us is, how are we going to get kids into the pipeline to go to college at all? There isn't a level playing field."

Not by a long shot. Boston Latin's students go on to the nation's best universities, while half of the city's public school kids would currently fail the state's new minimum graduation requirements. Eighty percent of those kids are minorities, and 85 percent of them are poor enough to qualify for the free lunch program. Clearly, there's a need for programs that would do more than shoehorn a few bright kids into an exam school.

The End of the Rainbow Coalition

Most of the students at San Francisco's Martin Luther King Middle School live in Hunter's Point, a neighborhood that is dirt-poor, crime-ridden, and literally toxic: The air reeks with deadly fumes from an old Navy yard dumping-site. Many of them come from what headmaster James Taylor calls "very impacted backgrounds, like what you would see on a TV special about crime in America." So many of their parents are addicts or abusive or just plain absent, that lately Taylor has begun arranging for some of them to live at the homes of staff members, where they will at least be safe and able to do their homework.

But on Saturday mornings a bright yellow school bus stops in front of the front doors at MLK and picks up about a dozen students to drive them over the Bay Bridge to Berkeley. They step off the bus into an immaculate world of plazas and fountains, and walk into the Bechtel Engineering Building. There they are met by two or three cheerful Berkeley undergraduates who will tutor them in math and science and assure them that they too, if they work hard enough, can go to college.

"It is not an exaggeration to say the process of selection of who will go to college begins in the first grade," declared University of California Chancellor Robert Berdahl at a press conference in January. "With each passing year, students denied equal access to challenging classes and ultimately to college-prep courses see their chances of college admission decline." The remedy, Berdahl added, lay in a redoubled outreach effort for poor and "underrepresented" students at schools like MLK, all the way from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Ironically, this sudden hunger for equal opportunity grew directly from what most California liberals saw as a disaster: the UC regents' 1995 decision to ban the use of race and gender in hiring and admissions. The deans at Berkeley had spent the previous decade crafting a multiculturalist paradise by cutting the percentage of white undergrads in half and swelling the size of the Asian, Latino, and black presences on campus. Almost half of every freshman class was judged on race and ethnicity as well as merit — a process they defended in the name of diversity rather than past injustices. Now their treasured rainbow was about to wash away, or so it seemed, unless they could find a solution before the new rules kicked in for the entering class of 1998.

Their answer has been to unleash an army of tutors — both faculty and undergraduates — on local public schools. "What we're really doing is opening up a whole new range of interactions between

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campuses and schools," says Karl Pister, a UC emeritus professor who is overseeing the new plan. "You often hear people talk about the educational continuum, but there really hasn't been one. Now we're trying to give some substance to that myth."

You can smell the hype, but beneath it is a real ferment of ideas about reaching out to low-income students. UC San Diego is actually building a charter school right on campus, designed to boost under-performing children from poor families into the UC system. The school staff will include undergraduate tutors who will get "public service" credit for their teaching. "This is not about lowering the gates," says Cecil Lytle, the UCSD provost who introduced the idea. "Affirmative action has not elevated the academic achievement of minority youngsters, and that's what we'd like to do with this program." Lytle wants other campuses, at UC and around the country, to follow suit. "Every major city has four or five major universities right in the hood," he says. "They're already providing expertise for agriculture, law, medicine. Why not use them to improve the schools?"

PHOTO COURTESY OF USMAPS

A USMAPS class at Fort Monmouth in Eatontown, NJ

In the meantime, a number of UC campuses are already running a number of programs for local schoolchildren on campus. "We think we're the answer now," says Mike Aldaco, statewide director of the Math, Engineering, Science, and Achievement (MESA) program. "Essentially, the regents took away a tool for maintaining diversity, so the key for us now is working intensively with minority students at the precollege level, making sure they can clear the bar by a healthy margin." MESA arranges for buses to take children to the campus after school and on Saturday mornings, where an undergraduate or professor drills them on math and science. It's too soon to say what effects this will have in the long term, but Aldaco claims that 80 percent of the local minority kids in public schools who went through the MESA in its early years wound up in college, compared to virtually none of those who didn't.

But with over 500,000 public school students in the Bay area, there's a limit to what Berkeley — or any UC campus, for that matter — can do. "The university can't make up for the failure of the public school system," says Ryan Tate, a Berkeley senior who sat in on the UC Outreach Task Force, a 32-member panel charged with finding new ways to maintain student diversity without preferences. "They're trying so hard to make up for 209, but there's a real danger that they could try to do too much and spread themselves too thin."

And some education researchers are skeptical about what the current crop of programs can do for low-income students, particularly if they focus exclusively on remedial education. "Most programs for minority kids focus on weaknesses, and the kids never really become motivated to excel," says Uri Treisman, a mathematician who has taught at Berkeley and recently won a MacArthur Foundation grant for his own educational program work. "They may have the rhetoric of high intention, but no system to help achieve it. That's very dangerous."

One of the few programs that has proved consistently effective with high school children is Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID, which was founded in 1980 by a high school English teacher in San Diego named Mary Catherine Swanson. Swanson wanted to find a way to accommodate the torrent of poor, underprepared black and Hispanic students who were bussed into her school that year as part of a federal desegregation order. She knew the program would never work if minority students felt stigmatized by it, or saw it as a "nerdy" activity better suited to whites and Asians. She had to find a way to create a forum for intensive academic work that the whole school would respect.

Her solution was to bill the program as an elective offered during school hours rather than afterward, and to focus it on core subjects. The students involved would end up studying fewer subjects and knowing them much better. It was "not an affirmative action program," she says, though its prerequisites—economic hardship, parents who didn't go to college, low (but not failing) grades — landed her a majority of blacks and Hispanics. Four years in, the entire

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The Washington Monthly *Journalism Award*

DECEMBER 1997

WILL ENGLUND AND GARY COHN

"The Shipbreakers"

The Baltimore Sun

When the Navy began selling off obsolete ships at the end of the Cold War, a new industry was born: shipbreaking. As Englund and Cohn report in their series, the pay is meager, the hours are bad, and the work is dangerous. The men who do it — mostly migrant workers or illegal aliens — have little protection against toxic sludge, asbestos fibers, lead, and collapsing hulls. Many have died, and many more have been permanently injured. The contractors who hire them often have dismal records of exploiting workers and dumping dangerous pollutants. Yet neither the Navy nor the Department of Defense makes a serious effort to oversee the scrappers. And though the most dangerous work is done abroad, the authors make it clear that conditions in a number of ports throughout the U.S., including Baltimore, are abysmal.

MARY FRICKER

"Insult to Injury: Workers Compensation"

The Santa Rosa (Cal.) Press Democrat

Fricker spent a year finding out what happens to California workers who are injured on the job. The answer: legal hassles, delayed benefits, and despair. The state's workers compensation laws were last overhauled in 1993 in response to widespread allegations that fraudulent claims were pushing costs for employers and insurers through the ceiling. But Fricker finds that the charges were exaggerated, and that the system's real and continuing injustice lies in its unfairness to workers. Injured people often spend days or weeks just trying to reach a claims adjuster, only to be treated rudely and forced to settle for drastically reduced compensation pay. Fricker reviews the weaknesses of the new system in her comprehensive series and argues that the first step towards reform lies in an effective system for monitoring claims.

school showed a 35 percent gain in basic math skills, and a 46 percent gain in languages.

"Part of the genius of AVID," says Treisman, "is that it's not focused on race. It breaks down stereotypes in an environment of common challenge." In other words, AVID is a kind of civilian analogue for USMAPS. It's no surprise that the Department of Defense took an interest in what AVID was doing with minority kids in 1990, and asked Swanson if she would extend the program to DOD schools at U.S. military bases around the world. Eight years later, AVID is being used in 580 schools in 11 states and 13 foreign countries. Of those students who go through the program, 93.8 percent go on to college. And they stay: According to research by faculty at UC San Diego, 89 percent of AVID graduates stay on after two years, in a state where 50 percent of college students drop out after freshman year.

Still, programs like AVID will never fill the gap left by the eclipse of preferences. They're too small and too few, and they cannot do much more than skim off a group of students who might have made it anyway. The only way to make sure that all poor kids have a fair shot at success by the time they finish high school is to start much earlier and push a lot harder. And believe it or not, there's every reason to believe the government can help us do that.

True Colors

On May 17, 1965, Lyndon Johnson stepped into the Rose Garden to introduce a program called Head Start. "Five and six year old children are inheritors of poverty's curse and not its creators," he said. "Unless we act, these children will pass it on to the next generation, like a family birthmark." The president's new program was designed to provide decent primary care for children who might not otherwise get it, and to start them reading early so they wouldn't fall behind in elementary school. After he left office in 1968, Johnson would often drive across the creek from his Texas ranch to the local Head Start center to take the kids out for candy in his white Lincoln Continental. He was intensely proud of the program, which reminded him of the lessons he had learned about "the high price of poverty and prejudice" as a young schoolteacher in a town near the Mexican border.

Thirty years later, Head Start is still underfunded. Despite its proven success at helping poor children, it only serves about 40 percent of those who are eligible. Critics have claimed that the IQ gains it brings to children tend to disappear a few years later. But that has less to do with Head Start than with the miserable quality of the public elementary schools most of

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these children attend. As Sargent Shriver, the architect of Head Start, said: "If one plants a tree, for example, and gives it lots of nourishment at its beginning and then goes away and leaves it for the next five years, the tree will not grow as well as if the nourishment were continued." Especially, we might add, if the tree is left in a crumbling building full of crack addicts and gang-bangers. Yale researcher Edward Zigler puts it more prosaically: "To continue the momentum towards success, there must be a smooth transition from the preschool to the school environment and coordinated programming that builds upon prior learning."

Putting programs like that in place would be expensive. That's why it might make a lot of sense for Clinton to propose them as an alternative to current forms of affirmative action. Expanding Head Start into a full range of boot camp-style assistance programs, with the goal of giving all children something like a decent shot at success by the time they're 18, would do a lot more for the underclass than racial preferences ever have.

But needs-based programs, however well-intentioned, won't get far if ordinary voters see them as just another handout to the poor. They would have to be tough, and they have to find ways to maintain a broad base of support. That may sound like mission impossible, but it's been done before. The GI Bill was expensive, but it had the whole-hearted support of Americans, because they knew those veterans had helped to win the war. And it led to an 85 percent increase in black college enrollment. Bringing back mandatory national service — an idea this magazine has long supported — would make a full-scale equal opportunity program feasible by supplying some of the labor, and giving middle-class children a stake in the program. It would also build on the success of the GI Bill in helping poor kids pay for college. When Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia and Congressman Dave McCurdy of Oklahoma introduced a national service bill in 1989, it was attacked on the grounds that it would disproportionately benefit minority and poor kids. That's true — and it's a good reason to revive the idea.

In the meantime, the death of affirmative action should give us cause for hope, not despair. Some of the deans at the University of California have started admitting, however grudgingly, that ending preferences has pushed them towards a fairer admissions policy. "Ironically, Proposition 209 has strengthened support for more aggressive forms of outreach," said one vice-chancellor who bitterly opposed it at the time. If the end of preferences has the same effect everywhere, bring it on. ●

JANUARY 1998

MELVIN CLAXTON AND WILLIAM GAINES

"Loopholes Give Weapons New Life"

The Washington Times

Claxton and Gaines bring to light the loopholes in federal law that keep criminals just beyond the reach of law enforcement agencies. In 1997, firearms were responsible for over 31,000 homicides and suicides in the United States. Many of these weapons are military surplus, dating as far back as WWII, or constructed from parts found in military scrap yards. With greater firepower than those issued to police, the guns have been finding their way into the hands of the American public through such low-regulation means as private shops, gun shows, the internet, and even the government-sponsored Civilian Marksmanship Program. Claxton and Gaines conclude that despite our nation's 22,000-plus firearms laws and ordinances, Congress will have to write tougher legislation to stem the current increase in gun-related violence.

DALE RUSSAKOFF

"When the Bough Breaks: One Child's Chaotic Bounce In Mother Government's Lap"

The Washington Post

Horror stories of child abuse and neglect have made the front page with increasing frequency in recent years, but we rarely hear much about their context: the rapidly expanding child welfare system. Russakoff's three-part series provides a comprehensive look at what happens to poor children whose parents cannot or will not care for them. Focusing on three individuals — a foster child in New York, a caseworker in Cleveland, and a longtime drug addict in Maryland — Russakoff describes the heartbreaking troubles they face and the rising pressures on the nation's fastest-growing entitlement program.

THE MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARD is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Nominations for stories run in February are due March 2.

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The Year the GOP Went South

How the 1964 Republican convention changed the face of the GOP

BY TAYLOR BRANCH

REPUBLICANS OPENED THEIR NATIONAL convention in the San Francisco Cow Palace on Monday, July 13. All three television networks covered the four-day national pageant more or less continuously, anticipating an abrupt regional and ideological shift of power toward Sen. Barry Goldwater's Western conservatives from the long-dominant Eastern business interests. There was little suspense beyond a slight possibility that Dwight Eisenhower, the only Republican president of the past 30 years, might throw his transcendent influence publicly against Goldwater. Eisenhower was known to resent Goldwater for calling his administration a "dime store New Deal," and privately he had threatened to renounce the Goldwater forces for reckless exploitation on civil rights, saying that if Republicans "begin to count on the 'white backlash,' we will have a big civil war." Rumors of a decisive Eisenhower statement quickened when his brother Milton delivered a passionate nominating address on behalf of William Scranton, the surviving alternative to Goldwater, but Eisenhower remained neutral to the end. He could not bring himself to split his party in support of Scranton, a sure loser to Goldwater, and he had never been comfortable speaking about racial harmony, anyway.

In his speech to the convention on Tuesday night, Eisenhower himself stirred the passions for which he blamed Goldwater. "Let us not be guilty of maudlin sympathy for the criminal ... roaming the streets with switchblade knife," he declared. The Cow Palace came alive with roars of approval. ("The phrase 'switchblade knife' means 'Negro' to the average white American," explained a dismayed Roy Wilkins in a newspaper column entitled "Ike Struck Lowest Blow." Wilkins could only hope that a speech writer had inserted the sentence without Eisenhower's knowledge.) Eisenhower evoked still greater emotion when he attacked the press, urging his audience to "particularly scorn the divisive efforts of those outside our family, including sensation-seeking columnists and commentators, because ... these are people who couldn't care less about the good of our party." This time the delegates responded with standing cheers, many shaking angry fists at the reporters' booths around the Cow Palace.

Campaign historian Theodore White described the release of pent-up anger as a turning point for the convention, if not for the role and reputation of the American press. Before then, White contrasted the "well-dressed and well-mannered Goldwater delegates" favorably with "civil rightsers" marching and picketing outside the Cow Palace, but the Eisenhower speech opened the convention itself to confrontation. Goldwater delegates and the spectator galleries showered New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller with catcalls and boos when he tried to speak against extremism. Hostilities erupted on the convention floor. Afterward, neither the triumphant Goldwater conservatives nor the defeated Rockefeller-Scranton liberals smoothed their raging antagonism in the

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interest of party unity. "Hell, I don't want to talk to that son-of-a-bitch," Goldwater growled when Rockefeller called him to concede the nomination. *Life* magazine bemoaned the "ugly tone" of the entire convention. *The New York Times* called it a "disaster" for both the United States and the Republicans, saying the Goldwater nomination could "reduce a once great party to the status of an ugly, angry, frustrated faction."

On the morning after his acceptance speech, Senator Goldwater sought an audience with General Eisenhower, who was straying again toward rebellion over Goldwater's chief applause line, "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice." Echoing a widespread public outcry, Eisenhower demanded to know how Goldwater could see "extremism" as good politics when it smacked of kooks. More personally, he told Goldwater that the slogan reminded him of right-wing zealots who had called Eisenhower himself "a conscious agent of the communists" in the White House, which was "utter tommyrot." Goldwater stammered through several unsuccessful replies before trying a D-Day analogy. What he meant was that patriotism required sacrifice, said Goldwater, and that General Eisenhower had been the ultimate "extremist" for liberty when he sent the Allied troops across the English Channel against Hitler. This interpretation transformed Eisenhower's mood. "By golly, that makes real sense," he said with a smile of relief that nearly matched Goldwater's. Still, this close call within the Republican bosom shook the new presidential candidate, who resolved never to repeat his signature phrase during the campaign.

Newsweek pronounced the San Francisco convention "stunningly total — and unconditional ... an authentic party revolution, born of deep-seated frustration with the existing order, executed by a new breed of pros with a ruthless skill." Other mainstream outlets speculated about Eisenhower, the rejection of Wall Street Republicans, or Goldwater's poor prospects against Lyndon Johnson, but their excitements were mild beside the acute distress of Negro publications. "GOP Convention Spurns Negroes," cried the *Cleveland Call and Post*. "Negro Delegates to GOP Convention Suffer Week of Humiliation," headlined the Associated Negro Press newswire. "The Great Purge of Negroes," announced *Jet*. "GOP Negroes Washed Away by the Goldwater Ocean," said the *Chicago Defender*. Their focus was less on the Goldwater nomination itself than on the institutional rejection of cherished Republican fixtures such as George W. Lee of Memphis, delegate to every GOP convention since 1940, who had "seconded the nomination of Robert A. Taft" in 1952. The San Francisco convention, sweeping aside Lee's credentials claim that he and 200 "regular" Negro Republicans had been railroaded out of the Shelby County caucus, seated "lily-white" delegations in Tennessee and every other Southern state "for the first time since Reconstruction Days," reported the *Pittsburgh Courier*, noting that the caucus of Southern Republicans, "to add insult to injury," named its hotel headquarters Fort Sumter. Southern Republicans re-formed as a homogeneous group. Of the region's 375 convention delegates, all were white and at least 366 supported Goldwater.

Minority observers mourned the loss of Republican stalwarts far beyond the sinecures and patronage posts of the South. In "Cal. GOP/White Man's Party," the *California Eagle* of Los Angeles protested a seldom-mentioned fact about Goldwater's victory over Rockefeller in the decisive June 2 primary: It gained convention seats and control of party machinery for a slate of 86 California delegates that "by deliberate choice" was exclusively white. Nationwide, by slating no Negro candidates and defeating most opposing tickets, Goldwater strategists whittled the number of Negro delegates to a minuscule 14 of 1,308, roughly one per hundred, in what newspapers called the fewest "ever to be certified to a Republican convention."

At the Cow Palace, the rolling invective that startled television viewers fell personally upon this tiny remnant. The *Cleveland Call and Post* reported that George Fleming of New Jersey ran from the hall in tears, saying Negro delegates "had been shoved, pushed, spat on, and cursed with a liberal sprinkling of racial epithets." George Young, labor secretary of Pennsylvania, complained that Goldwater delegates harassed him to the point of setting his suit jacket on fire with a cigarette. Baseball legend Jackie Robinson summarized his "unbelievable hours" as an observer on the convention floor: "I now believe I know how it felt to be a Jew in Hitler's Germany."

The *Chicago Defender* raised the Nazi analogy to a blaring headline: "GOP Convention, 1964 Recalls Germany, 1933." Editor John H. Sengstacke eulogized the lost tradition reaching back to the armies of Grant and Sherman: "The Grand Old Party, which fought against slavery, which kept the flame of hope burning on the altar of freedom ... which sustained the faith of Negro people ... is gasping its last breath in the Cow Palace." In the South, where Negro Republicans could imagine no substitute haven among Democrats, editors and owners of the few Negro newspapers writhed under the assault to their Republican identi-

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ty. Atlanta *Daily World* owner C. A. Scott first denied the Cow Palace revolution ("Scranton on the Move"), then mitigated its effect ("stands to reason ... that the party as a whole will not be carried too far from traditional Republican principles"), then pretended it was good ("... may have a stimulating effect on the development of a real two-party system in the South"), and finally called upon the scalded, soul-torn Old Guard to "hold the fort" no matter what. He praised the Negro delegates for deciding not to walk out of the Cow Palace in abject resignation. They had endured only a "graphic demonstration" of what Democrats — "the party of Bilbo, Eastland, Thurmond, Barnett, Wallace" — inflicted regularly through the past

Who's Who

By Susan Threadgill

Two of the more curious attackers of **Bill Clinton**'s alleged adultery and lying were **George Will** and **Joe Klein**. Klein, you will recall, repeatedly lied about his authorship of *Primary Colors* and indignantly attacked those who said he lied. A few years ago, Will's first wife evicted him, throwing his belongings on the street in front of their home, after she learned that he was involved with another woman.

Is **Bill Gates** worried about the antitrust suit that the Department of Justice's **Joel I. Klein** has brought against Microsoft? It seems he just might be. To back up his 70 in-house lawyers, he has retained not just one but two of the nation's most prestigious firms, **Sullivan and Cromwell** of New York and **Covington and Burling** of Washington.

To back up the attorneys, Microsoft has a Washington lobbying team headed by **Jack Krumholtz** and has enlisted the service of two highly influential former congressmen, Republican **Vin Weber** and Democrat **Tom Downey**.

Thoughts of hypocrisy naturally lead to **George Stephanopolous**. **Mickey Kaus** recently noted in *Slate* that in the 1992 campaign documentary, "The War Room," Stephanopolous "bullied and cajoled" a phone caller who proposed to release a list of Clinton paramours: "You would be laughed at ... I guarantee that if you do this you will never work in Democratic politics again ... nobody will believe and people will think you're scum."

Now that Stephanopolous has become a Clinton tsk-tsker on "ABC News," Kaus observes, "it's as if **Roy Cohn** went on television in the mid-1950s to soberly rue the damage wreaked by Sen. **Joe McCarthy** without any apology for his own role."

A straw poll was taken at the 25th annual Conservative Political Action Conference held recently in Arlington, Va. The result: **Steve Forbes** came out ahead with 23 percent, trailed by **George W. Bush** with 10. The significance of the poll, insiders tell us, is that these are the red-meat conservatives who dominate GOP caucuses and primaries. **David Keene**, the CPAC chairman, told **Ralph Hallow** of *The Washington Times* that the results, which more than doubled the 11 percent Forbes got at last year's conference, showed that Forbes "has worked the hardest and spent the most to build a following among economic and social conservatives."

When **Bill Clinton**'s friendship with **Vernon Jordan** first became news a few years ago, this column noted that they certainly had one interest in common. A recent article in *Newsweek* was more explicit: "Asked at a party earlier this year what it was he and Clinton talk about on the golf course, Jordan slyly replied: 'We talk pu—y.'" *Newsweek* is no doubt trying to be delicate, but those who are mystified should understand that two letters are missing, not one.

Curiously enough, before **Joel Klein** filed his landmark case against Microsoft, he had been suspected of being too soft on big business. At Klein's confirmation hearing, Sen. **Ernest Hollings** warned "we've got an antitrust fellow here who rolls over and plays dead."

We've noted that practically all the GOP presidential hopefuls are trying to hire **Ralph Reed**, the former head of the Christian Coalition. Now comes **Gloria Borger** with a report on just how far some of the fellows are willing to go to get Reed: "Both **Quayle** and **Forbes** have signed on to stump for some of Reed's congressional clients. Think

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half century, wrote Scott, concluding solemnly that it was "useless for a Negro today to think he solves the race issue in politics by jumping from one major party to the other."

White voters could jump, too, in numbers of far greater impact. "I think we just gave the South to the Republicans," President Johnson told his staff on the way to his Texas ranch after signing the civil rights bill. Aides debated his words in strictest confidence. One alarmist feared that Johnson could lose the election solely on the race issue. Others thought Johnson was hoping he could win even if he lost the entire South. There was precedent for white Southern Democrats voting Republican on presidential ballots

about it: campaigning to curry favor with a political consultant."

Does "Who's Who" get it first? You bet it does! From **Jamie Rubin**'s closeness to Secretary of State **Madeleine Albright** — wonder if it will be a tad diminished by his attention to bride-to-be **Christiane Amanpour**? — which we reported in September, to the crucial part of the **Gennifer Flowers** tape where **Bill Clinton** advised, "I just think that if everybody's on record denying it you've got no problem ... [I]f everybody kind of hangs tough, they're not going to do anything and if they ever ask if you've talked to me about it you can say no." That item appeared in the March 1992 "Who's Who."

Speaking of **Steve Forbes**, a friend swears he heard him say this in a recent speech: "But also too we're entering a new economic era as well."

If you wonder why **Ralph Reed** decided to go into campaign consulting, **Dick Morris** made $1.5 million from the 1996 **Clinton** campaign, even though he left in August after his toe-job at the Hotel Jefferson had been revealed. **Robert Squier**'s firm, **Squier Knapp Ochs**, which served throughout the campaign, took in $2.5 million, according to *The Washington Post*'s **John F. Harris**.

You've probably learned by now that **Lucianne Goldberg**, the literary agent who suggested that **Linda Tripp** tape **Monica Lewinsky**'s acocunt of her

ART BY ROMAN GENN

extracurricular activities in the Oval Office, was paid $1,000 a week by **Richard Nixon**'s forces to spy on **George McGovern** during the 1972 campaign. "I remember her as a very flashy blonde who wore short skirts, tight tops, and made goo-goo eyes at all the guys," **Bess Abell**, who was **Lady Bird Johnson**'s top aide, told Knight Ridder's **Frank Greve** and **Ron Hutcheson.**

But did you know that not only did Goldberg urge Tripp to do the taping and introduce her to *Newsweek*'s **Michael Isikoff**, she even suggested the messenger service, owned by Goldberg's older brother, that delivered Lewinsky's packages and then turned over the delivery records to Goldberg?

One of **Al Kamen**'s sources caught Sen. **Frank Lautenberg** pressuring flight attendants to move him into first class. The episode reminded one of our colleagues of a time when Sen. **David Pryor**, riding in coach, spotted Sen. **David Boren** luxuriating in first class. Pryor wrote a note signed "an indignant constituent" and had a flight attendant carry it to his colleague. As Boren read it, he blanched. It said: "I'm shocked to realize that you've either used taxpayers' funds or used special influence to sit in first class while those of us who work to pay your salary ride in the rear." Pryor finally confessed to authorship when they disembarked.

All of which reminds us of a recent taxpayer-financed junket led by Sen. **Trent Lott**. The highlight of the trip, wrote **Eric Schmitt** of *The New York Times*, was "a two-night stay at Fantasy Island, a luxurious resort in Honduras known for its world-class scuba diving, deep-sea fishing, tennis, and white sandy beaches."

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— Eisenhower and Nixon had cracked through to win a few Southern states — but it was daunting for any Democrat to contemplate the terrible math of running against rather than with the full weight of the traditional "solid South."

Only hindsight suggested that Johnson had glimpsed a more dramatic, permanent change. Bill Moyers recalled Johnson saying that he had delivered the South to Republicans "for your lifetime and mine," which would turn the whole structure of politics on a fulcrum of color. In their direst visions, after the Goldwater convention followed hard upon the civil rights bill, neither established experts nor shell-shocked Negro Republicans anticipated a wholesale switch of party identification down to the roots of congressional and local offices. Historic affiliations were too well fixed, with Republicans more united behind Negro rights than Democrats. In Congress, fully 80 percent of House Republicans and 82 percent of GOP senators had just voted for the civil rights bill, with Democrats lagging behind because of their entrenched segregationist wing. In precincts and state conventions, Republicans everywhere were organized in part around the glorious memory of Emancipation, which was precisely what had reduced them to near extinction among Southerners. For generations, none but the occasional eccentric Republican had bothered to contest elections for Southern state houses, legislatures, or courthouse jobs. Of 41 U. S. representatives from the core Deep South states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina, Republicans in 1964 numbered zero.

PHOTO COURTESY OF UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

Sen. Barry Goldwater accepts the 1964 Republican presidential nomination at the Cow Palace in San Francisco.

The century's first handful of promising Deep South Republican candidates arrived at the San Francisco convention hopeful of novel success in the fall elections. One of them, James D. Martin of Alabama, met alone with Senator Goldwater on the roof of the Mark Hopkins Hotel to propose George Wallace's hastily conceived terms for a campaign alliance. Wallace wanted a public reward — veto power over Supreme Court nominees, or, shockingly, a place on the Republican ticket as Goldwater's running mate — in exchange for his agreement not to run as an independent presidential candidate, which likely would doom Goldwater in Southern states. Goldwater declined, knowing he had more to lose than to gain, saying Wallace after all was still a Democrat. Martin returned to circulate on the Cow Palace floor with his message that Republicans should rise above crude racial appeals to larger issues such as federal heavy-handedness, which he called "Bobby Kennedy tearing around like a predator at the constitution of Mississippi and the registration laws of Alabama." Wallace himself formally withdrew from the presidential race three days after the Republican convention, leaving behind a tacit endorsement of Goldwater and a claim that he had changed the language of political debate. "Today we hear more states' rights talk than we have heard in the last quarter century ...," he told "Face the Nation" interviewers on July 19. "... The American people are sick and tired of columnists and TV dudes who ... try to slant and distort and malign and brainwash this country."

Only four years earlier, when advocates of civil rights had received a congenial welcome at the Republican convention in Chicago, Negro delegates had walked out of the Democratic convention in protest of Kennedy concessions to Southern segregationists. Now Negro leaders of both parties recoiled from the concerted hostility of the Cow Palace Republicans, which they could only hope was an aberrational coup traceable to Goldwater, disconnected from both old tradition and new racial progress. Martin Luther King and others denounced the Republican ticket on its first official day and nearly every day thereafter. With a peculiar mix of vehemence and care, King took pains to stop short of partisan endorsement, saying he was more against Goldwater than for Johnson, hoping that a sound enough defeat for Goldwater might restrain both parties from political white flight. ●

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Government vs. The Market

Why does our faith fluctuate between unfettered capitalism and the welfare state?

Paul Krugman

THE COMMANDING HEIGHTS: The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace That Is Remaking the Modern World
By Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw
Simon & Schuster, $26

and

THE WEALTH AND POVERTY OF NATIONS: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor
By David S. Landes
W.W. Norton & Co., $30

ON THE EVE OF THE STORM, the world economy was, to an extent never seen before, truly global. It was linked by new technologies that made it possible to ship products cheaply from one side of the globe to the other, to communicate virtually instantaneously over huge distances. But it was also, more importantly, linked together by the almost universal, if sometimes grudging, acceptance of a common economic ideology: the belief that free markets, with secure property rights, were the only way to achieve economic progress; and in particular that a nation hoping to make its way forward needed to welcome foreign trade and foreign investors with open arms. And this shared ideology did indeed lead to unprecedented transfers of Western capital and technology to emerging economies — transfers facilitated by the fact that everyone knew that any country that strayed from the path would be punished by financial crisis, and would soon be obliged to accept the harsh austerity prescribed by teams of Western technocrats.

The year, of course, was 1913 — the high-water mark of what economic historians sometimes call the First Global Economy — and over the decades that followed all of its certainties were lost. By the beginning of the 1950s, long-distance world trade had shrunk to a shadow of its former self, as Third-World economies, pursuing the goal of industrialization through "import substitution," began producing many of their own manufactured goods; private international movements of capital had virtually disappeared in the face of debt defaults, expropriations, and administrative restrictions. And about a third of the world's population lived under regimes that had completely rejected the idea of private property, let alone free markets.

The worldwide rejection of the market that took place in the first half of this century was not a matter of mere accident, or of the mysterious dominance of some misguided ideology. Free-market capitalism had proved, in the eyes of most people who thought about it, to be unstable, unjust, and ineffective. The world between the wars had been wracked by financial crises — crises in which those countries that broke the rules, going off the gold standard and restricting the free movement of money and goods, had done better than those that tried to maintain the Victorian virtues. Capitalism seemed to be marked by ever-growing inequality, with the rich getting richer while the poor got poorer; and it seemed to condemn less-developed nations to a permanent role as mere suppliers of raw materials to the established industrial powers. The turn away from the market, and toward the state, was based — or so everyone thought — on the hard lessons of experience.

It is therefore an astonishing reversal of fortune that, as we approach the century's end, nearly all the world has returned to more or less the same ideology of free markets and sound money that prevailed at its beginning. Understanding why the seemingly inexorable trend toward growing state power has become

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instead a seemingly inexorable withering of that power is perhaps the most important question of contemporary history. And so I was extremely curious to see what answer Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw would offer in their widely heralded new book *The Commanding Heights: The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace That is Remaking the Modern World.*

Alas, while I enjoyed the book, I came away feeling cheated. Indeed, one might go so far as to accuse Yergin and Stanislaw of playing a game of bait-and-switch. They promise to tell us "why"; but they never even try to go beyond "what."

Consider, for example, the centerpiece of their book: the rise and fall of the British welfare state. The outlines of that story are well told: After depression and war, the British people demanded and got a state that provided a strong social safety net and job security, in part by nationalizing key industries — the "commanding heights." Given our current cynicism about government, it is hard to imagine that this statist solution could have had any merits — but the fact was that for a generation or so it worked pretty well. Perhaps economic growth was slower than it might have been, perhaps Britain's rank as a world power eroded, but given full employment and steadily rising living standards, Harold Macmillan's famous declaration that "you never had it so good" was the simple truth. Then it all began to fall apart: inflation, rising unemployment, disruptive labor disputes — all preparing the ground for the radical free-market ideology of Margaret Thatcher and her guru, Keith Joseph. And Thatcherism, after a rocky start, did seem to deliver on enough of its promises that its essentials now seem secure despite the return of Labour to power.

So what do we learn from this account? Free-market capitalism was discredited by its failures, replaced with a mixed economy that was legitimized by its successes; then the mixed economy began to work badly, and was replaced by a return to free-market capitalism, which has been legitimized by its successes.... Clearly this leaves all the important questions unanswered. Why do free markets, which seemed to fail so drastically in the 1930s, seem to work pretty well nowadays? Why did the mixed economy, which seemed to work pretty well in the '50s and '60s, fall apart in the '70s and '80s? And, the big question, are we on some sort of pendulum — will the state rise again?

What would it take to answer these questions? Recounting the history is not enough. On reading Yergin and Stanislaw I found myself entertaining two hypotheses. One was that changing technology has been the driving force. After all, the collapse of capitalism's first golden age coincided with the rise of mass production; the era of the mixed economy was also the era in which the automobile industry was at that economy's core, and that state-within-a-state General Motors its emblematic firm. Perhaps the shift from mass production to just-in-time, from heavy industry to high tech, has somehow changed the rules about what works and what doesn't. In that case, predicting whether and when the pendulum will swing back is a matter of technological forecasting.

Or perhaps the story is really about psychology and sociology, not technology. Europeans who try to make sense of Eurosclerosis often point out that the factors that supposedly explain the continent's high unemployment rates — generous unemployment benefits, high minimum wages, regulations that make it expensive to hire new workers — go back to the the 1950s, yet at the time were somehow consistent with full employment. To explain the shift, they sometimes invoke a "generational" theory: The welfare state worked for its first generation because those who had grown up in the Depression, who feared unemployment and were grateful for the dignity of full employment, did not exploit the benefits to which they were entitled. Maybe there is a fundamental cycle: The failures of the market lead to an expanded state, which works as long as there is sufficient idealism to support it; but eventually cynicism prevails, and the market again appears an attractive alternative.

The point is that it makes a huge difference to our perspective which of these explanations — if either — is more nearly right. Yet Yergin and Stanislaw never give us anything that could help us decide. Instead they regale us with tales of the formative experiences of Margaret Thatcher and Deng Xiaoping — interesting (the photo of young Margaret playing the piano is almost worth the price of the book), but off the point. Indeed, one might wonder why a book that is in large part a celebration of the triumph of the private sector over the state mainly seems to tell us about the lives and deeds of — guess who? — politicians.

One cannot make the same criticism of David Landes' *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor.* Landes is a distinguished economic historian whose classic *Prometheus Unbound* remains unrivaled in its explanation of just what was revolutionary about the Industrial Revolution. Where Yergin and Stanislaw concentrate on the last few decades, Landes has a thousand-year perspective, and concentrates mainly (and properly) on technology and institutions. Where Yergin and Stanislaw tell stories about rulers and how they came to their beliefs, Lan-

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des tells us about companies and industries, and how they gained or lost advantage. And much of what he has to say is fascinating and insightful.

Yet in the end I felt as cheated by Landes as I did by *The Commanding Heights*. Surely readers of a book that promises in its very title to explain why some nations are rich while others are poor deserve more than Landes' concluding paragraph: "The one lesson that emerges is the need to keep trying. No miracles. No perfection. No millenium. No apocalypse. We must cultivate a skeptical faith, avoid dogma, listen and watch well, try to clarify and define ends, the better to choose means." For this we needed to read 500 pages?

In the end, what both books left me with was a sense of the inadequacy of narrative history as a guide to action. No matter how many interesting stories you may tell about the past, they are just that — stories — unless they are brought to bear on some hypothesis about how the world works. History is useful because it is a laboratory, in which time and chance have performed experiments that can confirm or reject our ideas. But you can't learn anything from those experiments unless you are actually willing to state your ideas clearly in the first place.

So I ask myself: What do Yergin and Stanislaw and Landes actually believe? And the answer, which seems to me to be damning, is that I am not sure. I think Yergin and Stanislaw approve of the move to the market, but I have had to pick that up by osmosis — or as a colleague of mine puts it, the economic moral is conveyed by innuendo, rather than stated in any way that could be refuted. And for all the erudition in Landes' book, I am at a loss to tell you what economic policies he might prescribe for any particular country.

So I am still waiting for a book that helps me understand what really happened in this utterly perplexing century, when the world moved decisively away from the market, then equally decisively back. The one thing I know is that whoever writes that book will have to be a person unafraid of offering theories as well as facts, and therefore of saying things that might turn out to be wrong. ●

Middle America's Dirty Little Secret

Behind the rhetoric of extremes lurks a nation of moderates

Paul Glastris

ONE NATION, AFTER ALL: How the Middle Class Think About God, Country, and Family
By Alan Wolfe
Viking Press, $24.95

BY READING THIS BOOK, YOU could have predicted the public's tolerant initial reaction to the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal. The book is about the moral views of the American middle class. In particular, the author, a prolific Boston University sociologist, tests the widely held assumption that there is a "culture war" going on out there among the general public (as opposed to among humanities professors and editorialists). As commonly understood, this culture war pits conservatives against liberals — or, in the language of sociology, traditionalists against modernists — in a battle over whether American culture is in moral decline, and if so, how to reverse it. Traditionalists believe in old-fashioned families with stay-at-home moms; they resent multiculturalism; they oppose abortion; they are highly patriotic in a my-country-right-or-wrong way; they believe in the absolute moral standards laid down by God in the Bible. Modernists have more flexible ideas about family structure; they defend the right of women to have abortions and work outside the home; they celebrate ethnic, racial, and religious diversity; they

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are made uncomfortable by unquestioning patriotism, and on moral issues tend to be secular and relativist.

To test this idea, Alan Wolfe and his research assistants conducted interviews with some 200 Americans in suburbs across the country. What they found was that while a certain fraction fall into one of these two categories, the majority do not. Instead, the battle between traditionalist and modernist positions is going on inside the hearts and minds of individual Americans. Most of those interviewed generally agree with the conservative critique of America — that softness toward criminals, easy divorce and abortion, permissive parenting, welfare programs that encourage illegitimacy, and the secular ideology of elites, have conspired to erode our moral sense. But these same people also see the benefits that come with the liberal-modernist stress on personal freedom and moral autonomy. They may think children are better off with Mom at home, but they see how happy their wives are working, and they like the extra income. They may have moral qualms about divorce and abortion, but they also have loved ones who've had them, and aren't altogether sure they made the wrong decision. "Americans do feel that they have lost the distinction between right and wrong and desperately want it back," writes Wolfe. But they part company with conservatives in that they "no longer believe that right and wrong provide unerring guidelines for informing them about how to lead their lives."

Partly as a result of their own personal moral quandaries, the American middle class has become profoundly nonjudgmental, observes Wolfe. They see contemporary life as so complex, demanding, and in flux that they, and only they — not their church, not their neighbors, and certainly not a bunch of politicians — can be trusted to figure out what the right thing to do is in any given situation. They want others to give them the benefit of the doubt on how they conduct their private lives, and hence are willing to give the same to others — including, apparently, the president of the United States.

By this analysis, conservatives are off the mark when they interpret the public's reaction to the Lewinsky scandal as an example of America's moral decline — and as evidence that Clinton is accelerating that decline. By (so far) withholding judgment, the public is not condoning adultery but asserting the right of individuals, when it comes to their personal lives, to make their own choices, and their own mistakes. Americans have not become moral relativists, says Wolfe, but "moral libertarians" who believe individuals should be their own moral guides. This may seem crazy to conservatives. But, as Wolfe observes, it is an inevitable outgrowth of the economic libertarianism conservatives admire: "Daniel Bell was right to point out two decades ago that culture is too integrated with economics for freedom in the one realm not to have spillover effects in the other." Middle-class Americans admire capitalism and believe in the idea that allowing individuals to pursue their own economic self interest will lead to general prosperity, even if that means having to tolerate excesses that Americans detest (such as exorbitant CEO salaries). Likewise, they have come to believe that a sort of Invisible Hand operates in the moral realm. Wolfe formulates this belief thusly: "Our freedoms make us special; taken to extremes, they cause us problems; but when we experience those problems, our very freedoms will help us find a way out."

Wolfe gained his insights in part because of the way he conducted his research. Rather than merely ask his subjects yes/no questions about their opinions on issues, as a pollster might do, he focused on how they qualified their answers. The resulting analysis rings true to my own experience. In the early '90s, I spent a lot of time on barstools in places like Akron and Green Bay, listening to "average Americans" vent about abortion, immigration, the government, or whatever issue my editors in Washington wanted to do a story about that week. Usually those stories were driven by some poll we'd done about "voter anger"; my job was to find people whose opinions illustrated the poll results. (We called this reporting "outside the beltway.") It was always possible to find one or two individuals who fit the profile. But to get to them I'd have to listen to a dozen others who would deliver their opinions with so much on-the-one-hand-on-the-other nuance as to make it almost impossible to convey their views fairly in a small amount of space. "Fools!" I'd think, "you're blowing your chance to get quoted in a national magazine!"

Often people would begin with the "right" answer, briskly delivered, but then add so many qualifiers as seemingly to contradict the position they started out with. They'd say they were definitely "against" abortion — but perhaps not in cases of rape and incest, or if the fetus were horribly deformed, or if it meant putting women who have abortions in jail. Bit by bit they'd reveal themselves to be, in a hedging, unenthusiastic way, pro-choice. Or they'd say, "Yes, absolutely, too many immigrants are being let into the country." But then they'd make it clear that they weren't against all immigrants, only the ones who come here illegally, commit crimes, take undue advantage of welfare, don't work hard, and don't become citizens. The rest are fine, they'd say, better than fine;

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why, I know this guy, came here from Pakistan without a dime, now he owns four taxis, works like a dog. I'll tell you, we could use a lot more like him.

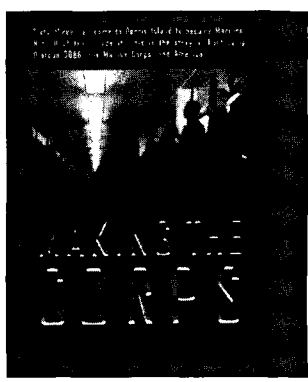
Conservatives famously misread the "voter anger" they were picking up in their polling, interpreting it (and their electoral success in 1994) as evidence that voters wanted them to ban abortion, restrict immigration, and dismantle the federal government. But when they tried to do just that, they sparked a public backlash from which they have yet to recover. Driven by their own ideological certitudes, they failed to listen to the nuances of what voters were saying: that abortion should be better regulated, not banned; that we should keep out the "bad" immigrants, not the "good" ones; that the government should be fixed, not dismantled. The Clinton agenda comes much closer to matching these demands than the GOP's. For all his faults, the president does have an ear for nuance.

None of which is to say that the voters will forever withhold judgment from Clinton. What he is alleged to have done is not within the bounds of what even today's tolerant middle class considers acceptable. We're on uncharted ground here, but in other contexts it's clear that middle-class Americans do not tolerate repeated irresponsibility. One of the most common and vehemently held beliefs among Wolfe's respondents was that there is a difference between the deserving and undeserving poor. The former category includes those who have made moral blunders — an unwed teenager who gets pregnant, for instance. But should that teenage mother go on to have another child out of wedlock, and another and another, she enters the ranks of the undeserving, and middle-class people lose patience. "I really don't like Newt Gingrich," a Brookline, Mass., dentist says to Wolfe, but when it comes to welfare for unwed mothers "there have to be limits." Here's how Wolfe sums up the distinction between deserving and undeserving poor:

> You become undeserving, not because of who you are, and certainly not because you did the wrong thing, but because something is amiss in the way you think. In particular, you think you can get away with behavior that taxes the generosity of the middle class over and over again and you believe that the person paying for your irresponsibility is not going to object.

Should the allegations about Clinton's irresponsibility eventually prove true, the voters may decide that he's undeserving, too.

The 1997 Political Book Award



MAKING THE CORPS

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Why We Don't Have Them
By E.D. Hirsch

The Conquest
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The Year the Dream Died
By Jules Witcover

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Political Booknotes

The Dark Side of the Border

by Howard LaFranchi

As a newspaper correspondent in Texas in the 1980s, I covered the U.S.-Mexico border — mostly from Brownsville, the Rio Grande Valley, and El Paso, but occasionally from as far west as the San Diego-Tijuana line. They were rich, newsy, and generally uplifting days on a once-sleepy but awakening 2,000-mile-long divide between the First and Third Worlds.

They were the years of the Sanctuary movement, when Americans opposed to the U.S. role in Central America's conflicts clandestinely helped Guatemalans and Salvadorans north and across the U.S. border to refuge. The immigration issue, always an up-and-down concern in the U.S., was on the up, but casual crossing outside federal government checkpoints (to shop, visit family, or earn dollars) was still widespread. The drug war was still focused on the Caribbean and not yet on the Colombian cartels' Mexican connections. (It was, of course, the U.S. government's squeeze on the Caribbean that rechanneled the drug flow through Mexico.) And toward the end of the decade, economic dreams rose on growing talk of a North American free-trade accord that would erase borders, weaken the push and pull of immigration, and bring everybody closer together.

TWILIGHT ON THE LINE: Underworlds and Politics at the U.S.-Mexico Border
by Sebastian Rotella
W.W. Norton & Co., $25

A decade later, when I returned to reporting on the border, this time from a correspondent's desk in Mexico City, I was shocked and saddened by what I found. The border of promise had in many places become a border of peril. Most striking of all was the rise of the Mexican drug cartels and the violence that accompanied their growing power. Immigration, too, had turned ugly, especially in California. Solid metal fences had gone up where friendship and cooperation were supposed to bloom. Urban and industrial pollution had worsened, and the much-heralded free-trade agreement, which took effect in January 1994 as NAFTA, was under attack even by some of its erstwhile supporters for destroying jobs in the United States and dampening wages on both sides of the border.

In a sense, the world that for centuries had left the border pretty much alone roared in like an occupying army in the globalizing '90s, bringing with it international mafias, the transnational flow of the desperately poor, and booming global trade. It is this globalized border of the 1990s that Sebastian Rotella brings alive with sometimes chilling storytelling in *Twilight on the Line: Underworlds and Politics at the U.S.-Mexico Border*. Now the *Los Angeles Times* bureau chief for South America, Rotella was from 1991-96 the *Times'* correspondent covering the San Diego-Tijuana border. The years of his assignment to this region are significant, because they correspond to the advent of illegal immigration as a global issue — with Chinese, and not just southern Mexicans and Central Americans, arriving in Tijuana to cross into America. They were also the years marked by the rise of the Arellano Félix brothers and their Tijuana-based drug-trafficking empire, considered the most treacherous in Mexico.

They were the years when Asian vessels, packed like slave ships with illegal Chinese immigrants, were found to be unloading their U.S.-bound cargo on the Pacific shore near Tijuana (1993); when the shocking assassination of a Catholic cardinal in Guadalajara was traced back to Tijuana and San Diego street gangs (1993); when the Mexican ruling party's presidential candidate was gunned down in a Tijuana slum (1994); when Mexican criminal justice officials in Tijuana, from the local police chief to state prosecutors and federal investigators, were murdered either because of the side they pledged their allegiance to in the drug lords' turf war, or because they were actually clean and were therefore everybody's enemy (1994, 1995, 1996 ...). They were the years of the rise of "narco-politics"

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in Mexico and in Baja California in particular.

Rotella tells the story of those years through a series of chapters, each focused on one of these defining events, with the storytelling ability and eye for detail of the award-winning reporter he is. It is stunning when he introduces us to Tijuana's reform-minded police chief, Federico Benítez, lays out the growing dangers the honest but inexperienced commander faced, then tells us how he was assassinated: "The federal police carried out the ambush with textbook precision."

Equally boggling is information, woven neatly into the story, such as: At one point in the early 1990s three brothers held the command posts of federal police units in three contiguous states in northwest Mexico, creating what one young state prosecutor (himself brutally murdered) called "a triangle of control" for drug trafficking. In similar stories full of telling descriptions and observations from a wide range of people, we enter the world of San Diego's Balboa Park boys, mostly homeless migrants from south of the border who sniff glue and sell their bodies to wealthy San Diegans; of San Diego's Logan Heights Chicano gang, some of whose members ended up hired guns for the Arellano Félix brothers; of politics and immigrant smuggling rings.

It's a compelling read — as far as it goes. This is essentially a book about the rise of the Mexican drug cartels and their effect on Mexican politics — especially in Baja California. It is not a book about the U.S.-Mexico border, as even the book's logo, which traces the distinctive "line" of the border from San Diego to Brownsville, would have the reader believe.

The border is a unique place in the world — where else do the developed and developing worlds come together with such energy and confrontation? And it is much more than the corrosive mix of violence, drugs, and illegal immigration explored here. It is also the birthplace of Mexico's strengthening democracy, the national land of economic opportunity for a more backward southern Mexico, a bubbling soup pot simmering a hybrid culture, a Texas-Mexico border very different in history and experience from its California counterpart. It is a place where the United States is learning about its own future, like it or not.

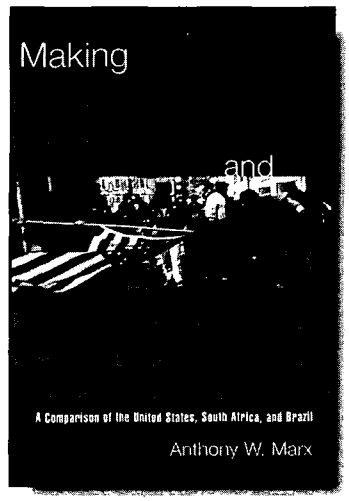
There are hints of this in *Twilight on the Line*: the Tijuana graffiti artist who wonders, "What do I have to do with Mexico City or Sinaloa, if I spent my life shopping here in San Ysidro [California] at Ralph's and Safeway?"; or Baja California's (and Mexico's) first opposition governor, Ernesto Ruffo, saying, "Baja California is full of people who made a decision to search for better life.... We have everything here, the best and the worst." Yet the book shortchanges the "best" even as it offers the important and gripping story of the "worst."

Rotella calls the border a "magical place," but he just doesn't give the reader enough to know what he means. And that's too bad. By the time one finishes this book, the tableau of a violent, corrupt, frightening border is quite complete. It's the other painting, the one of a border that draws people — especially on the Mexican side — for the opportunity, the freshness, the freedoms and futuristic gaze it offers, that remains little more than a sketch.

HOWARD LAFRANCHI *is the* Christian Science Monitor*'s Latin America correspondent in Mexico City.*

"...a tour de force."
— Charles Tilly, Columbia University

Making Race and Nation
A Comparison of the United States, South Africa and Brazil
Anthony W. Marx



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— M. Crawford Young, University of Wisconsin

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The Wonderful World of Disney

by Clifford Doerksen

FOUR YEARS AGO, WHEN THE Walt Disney Corp. made a bid to transform the Manassas National Battlefield Park into a theme park, intellectuals reared up in protest and ultimately defeated the project, even though it enjoyed the strong support of local businesses and politicians. Perhaps if the Ramada Hotel chain or Donald Trump had been behind the attempt to annex Manassas the outcome would have been the same, but the fact that it was Disney lent a particular color to the rhetoric of highbrow dissent. Was it not universally understood, after all, that the name "Disney" signified everything sentimental, false, and Philistine in American culture?

THE MAGIC KINGDOM: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life
by Steven Watts
Houghton Mifflin, $30

The day is now long past, but as Steven Watts reminds us in his valuable if uneven study, Walt Disney and his works once received adoring hosannas from the intelligentsia. Elite Disneyphiles in the 1930s included Gilbert Seldes, Sergei Eisenstein, Mark Van Doren, and Arturo Toscanini; comparisons to Leonardo, Hogarth, Daumier, and Matisse were routinely proferred, except by those critics who saw in Disney something entirely new and unprecedented in art. Disney himself affected an aw-shucks indifference to this kind of attention while it lasted, but the steady decline of his cultural reputation after 1940 was clearly galling to his mammoth ego.

The full reversal of Disney's critical fortunes was marked by the 1968 publication of Richard Schickel's scathing *The Disney Version*, which took Disney's measure in relation to the values of the counterculture and pronounced him vulgar, sentimental, and dehumanized, an assessment which has since become more or less entrenched as an upper-middlebrow shibboleth. Disney died shortly before the Schickel book appeared, but he had long before adopted a defensive populist posture in relation to his many detractors. "The critics think I'm corny," he told his studio associates. "Well, I am corny. As long as people respond to it, I'm okay."

With *The Magic Kingdom*, Professor Steven Watts, hitherto a cultural historian of the early American Republic, presents us with a fresh opportunity to evaluate the life and work of this architect of modern American culture. Although a confessed Disneyphile and the beneficiary of unprecedented cooperation from both the Disney Archive and the Disney family, Watts has produced an admirably even-handed work that should hold considerable interest even for those cynical souls who find themselves congenitally out of sympathy with the Disney aesthetic.

Watts defines that aesthetic here as the depiction of people, objects, and scenes in which dark or messy dimensions have been wiped away. But that doesn't keep him from exploring those same dimensions of Disney's own character. Driven, mercurial, domineering, manipulative, hard drinking, puritanical about sex but fond of grade-school potty humor, this Disney stands in stark contrast to Uncle Walt, the sunny television presence who warms the memory of anyone who grew up in the '50s.

The real subject of *The Magic Kingdom*, however, is not Disney's psychology but his work and its underlying cultural significance. Of course, no undertaking is more fraught with potential for intellectual pratfalls than the deep reading of popular culture (a point that Watts gamely acknowledges with a pre-emptive epigram from Walt Disney: "We just try to make a good picture. And then the professors come along and tell us what we do.") In attempting to draw out the deeper political and aesthetic meanings of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, Snow White, Pinocchio, Dumbo, and Bambi, Watts registers some hits and some misses. The most persuasive political analyses here are often also the most obvious ones. For example, it seems safe to hazard that the national mania for Disney's "Three Little Pigs" and its hit theme song "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" in 1933 had something to do with the Depression. The political explication of the later Disney products of the Cold War era is similarly spot-on. Watts may be reaching a bit, however, with the observation that Mickey Mouse's eclipse in popularity by the more belligerent Donald Duck in the late '30s subtly reflected a gradual rethinking of America's global situation. Perhaps people were simply tired of the mouse and ready for a new cartoon character? In other places Watts is simply too much of a historian and not enough of a critic, as when his discussion of Disney's status as an Artist ends in stalemate, with some of Watts' grandest claims for Disney the auteur suddenly dampened into nothingness by the following disclaimer:

> In many ways, of course, such high-falutin aesthetic maneuvering was at best incidental, and at worst unintended or unconscious. Most of the time Walt Disney simply followed his instincts in utilizing humor, comedy, and music in pursuit of mass entertainment, and any explicit thoughts about art lay deep in the shadows.

Still, everything in this book stands well above the current, permissively silly academic standards for the discussion of pop culture. And Watts succeeds admirably in generating an understanding of how a young nobody from the Midwest named Walter Elias Disney became a major mogul of movies and television and eponymous ruler of a theme-park kingdom.

Hardbitten Disneyphobes will come away from *The Magic Kingdom* fortified with the knowledge that the first movie tie-in merchandising campaign was for Disney's *Snow White* all the way back in 1937; confirmed Disney lovers will profit from the book's wealth of anecdotes concerning Walt Disney and the Disney studios. Those in between can benefit from a new perspective on a man whose influence on global popular culture has yet to wane, three decades after his death.

CLIFFORD DOERKSEN *is a Woodrow Wilson Fellow in History at Princeton University.*

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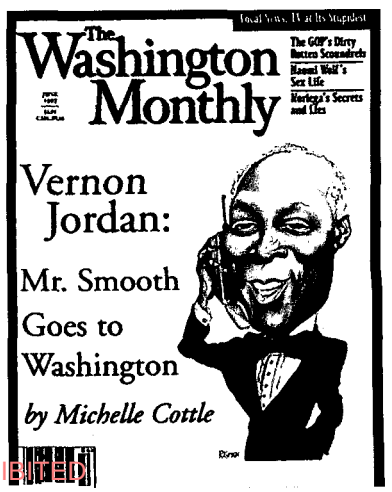

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Ode to the Gipper

by Matthew Dallek

In early 1987 Dinesh D'Souza, just 26 years old and already an up-and-comer in the conservative movement with a flair for controversy, took a job as a senior domestic policy adviser in the Reagan White House. He was quickly disappointed. D'Souza discovered an administration riven by turf wars and petty personnel conflicts and a well-meaning but ineffectual president hardly up to the task of running the country. "No one — not even the president — seemed to be in charge," D'Souza confesses in his new book. "I liked Reagan as a person, but like many other conservatives, I worried that he lacked the intellectual temperament and administrative skills to give new direction to the country."

RONALD REAGAN: How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader
by Dinesh D'Souza
Free Press, $25

Now a research scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and author of best-selling screeds on multiculturalism and American race relations, D'Souza has changed his mind about his former boss. Drastically. *Ronald Reagan: How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader* reads like a long mea culpa. D'Souza concedes that the president was not perfect, remaining aloof from policy minutiae and the day-to-day operations of his staff. But, the author argues, Reagan was a great visionary, a shrewd and calculating chief executive who cured inflation, jump-started the stagnant economy, vanquished malaise, spread democracy to nations in need, and won the Cold War.

D'Souza is convincing on one point: Reagan was a more sophisticated operator than many critics have acknowledged. The Gipper inspired intense loyalty in his aides and possessed, in addition to his much-ballyhooed PR skills, an uncanny ability to make popular seemingly simplistic and antiquated conservative beliefs. He also played, it seems fair to say, a role in ending the Cold War, helped lead the American right out of the political wilderness, and set the parameters for much of the current debate over welfare, taxes, and entitlements.

But the notion that Reagan was a brilliant statesman with a set of nation-saving policies — a 20th-century titan who revitalized America and made the world safe for democracy — contradicts much of what is known about the man and his administration. In book after book Reagan aides have charted, in often painful detail, the president's disturbing lack of interest in and less-than-stellar grasp of vital national issues. Scholars and journalists have told a different though equally grim tale of ballooning deficits, expanding poverty rates, urban decay, and rampant corruption.

D'Souza responds to such less-than-rosy portraits of the Reagan presidency by drubbing disgruntled White House aides as perfidious "ingrates," assailing critics as liberal naysayers, and glossing over serious questions about the costs of Reagan's policies. He also displays an uncanny ability to turn Reagan's warts and blunders into great triumphs. The author claims, for example, that Reagan's decision to storm the tiny Caribbean island of Granada in 1983 marked a watershed in American diplomatic history, not only saving American medical students from bloodthirsty Cuban communists but also "help[ing] to exorcise the ghost of Vietnam from the American psyche." He argues that when the president mistakenly addressed his secretary of housing as "Mr. Mayor," Reagan was only showing his disdain for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which he deemed a "rat hole of public policy." D'Souza further informs us that Reagan didn't care whether his secretary of the treasury and chief of staff swapped jobs because he had larger, more important matters to worry about. Finally, in a strange twist of logic, D'Souza touts Reagan's multibillion-dollar budget deficit as a stroke of brilliance that helped run the Soviets into the ground and limit the growth of evil entitlement programs like welfare and Medicare.

There is nothing wrong with revising history, but D'Souza's book is too long on rhetoric and too short on facts to alter the verdict on Reagan's presidency.

Matthew Dallek, *a Visiting Scholar at U.C. Berkeley, is at work on a book, to be published by the Free Press, entitled* The Making of Ronald Reagan.

The Reluctant Pol

by Richard Norton Smith

George Bush is the first healthy ex-president since William Howard Taft to forego writing a White House memoir. This is not all the two have in common. Reared in a family tradition of public service, subsequently polished at Yale, each man capably filled several appointive positions before being elevated to the presidency by a legendary sponsor whose shadow he could never quite escape. After losing a bitter three-way contest for re-election in 1912, Taft joked that no American had ever been elected ex-president by such an overwhelming majority. He went on to redeem himself as chief justice of the United States, in which position he could at last exercise the judicial temperament that had proven so ill-suited to the political arena.

GEORGE BUSH: The Life of a Lone Star Yankee
by Herbert S. Parmet
Scribner, $32.50

Bush, too, seems a man at peace with himself, having demonstrated through his recent skydiving exploits and November dedication of his presidential library that life begins at 72. He may yet enjoy the ultimate vindication should his namesake son, currently Texas' popular governor, attain the White House in 2000. Yet the senior Bush, no less than Taft before him, appears a historical figure at odds with the prevailing culture. An establishmentarian in a country suspicious of elites, a patrician in an increasingly populist party, a gentleman in an

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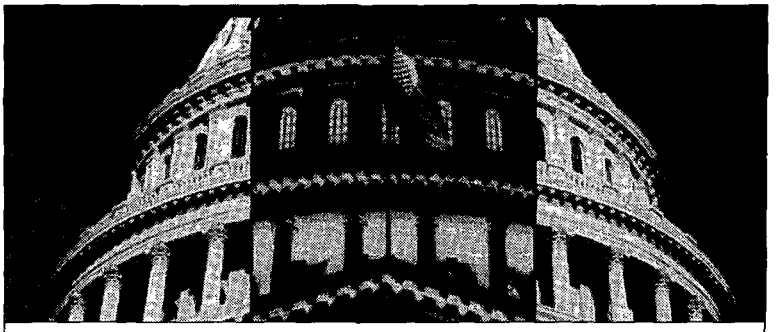
ungracious era, Bush's efforts to square the circle of his own contradictions at times approached cognitive dissonance.

That he should thrive at all in so hostile a political environment makes Bush's story interesting — all the more so because it is told, vividly and authoritatively, by Herbert Parmet, an academic who blessedly does not write for other academics. Parmet, the highly regarded biographer of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nixon, gained unprecedented access to the former president's personal diaries and other papers. The result is *Lone Star Yankee*, a fitting metaphor for an unconventional leader who declared early in his career that "labels are for cans."

Parmet gives us a portrait of the 41st president that is often surprising and occasionally poignant, as its protagonist mulls the cost of his ambitions, a hostile press, the inevitable trimming, and various indignities inflicted upon his loved ones. "Why do we do it all?" he muses during his unsuccessful 1980 campaign. "Why, why, why"? Here is a Bush we have rarely seen, and almost never heard. In place of the tongue-tied orator is a grieving parent who writes, in eloquent recollection of his long-lost daughter, Robin, "We need a girl. ... We had one once — she'd fight and cry and play and make her way just like the rest. ... Her peace made me feel strong, and so very important. ... But she is still with us. We need her and yet we have her. We can't touch her, and yet we can feel her." (It was in caring for her dying daughter that Barbara Bush's hair turned prematurely gray.)

To Parmet, Bush is "a Burkean conservative with the heart and soul of a moderate," a leader who cared less for ideology than for personality. This alone was enough to ensure suspicions among movement conservatives for whom government is not an honorable calling, as Bush asserted, but the enemy within. Bush's fondness for pork rinds and the Gatlin Brothers made him a traitor to his class, while his background as a moderate on social issues like abortion did nothing to endear him to the religious right and other cultural conservatives. In the 1960s then-Rep. George Bush earned the nickname "Rubbers" for his staunch



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EDITED BY
JOSEPH S. NYE, JR.
PHILIP D. ZELIKOW
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John F. Kennedy School of Government
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support of Planned Parenthood. But by the 1980 elections Bush had embraced the anti-abortion language of the GOP, as if hoping to obliterate the tensions between his heritage of moderation and the fiercely ideological party he yet hoped to inherit.

For the duration of Reagan's tenure, Bush played the good soldier, a model vice president whose biggest offense, in Parmet's view, was excessive loyalty to his chief. Among Bush's less savory responsibilities was the courtship of Ross Perot, who in his eagerness to rescue missing American POWs offered to pay $1 million per prisoner to the government in Hanoi. Perot's blatant violation of the Logan Act went overlooked by an administration reluctant to offend the prickly Texas billionaire. Perot conceived a grudge against Bush anyway. Long before he accused Bush and the GOP of attempting to disrupt his daughter's wedding, Perot was investigating the vice president's private finances and trying unsuccessfully to link two Bush sons to the Iran-Contra scandal.

Never very comfortable with the business of politics, Parmet notes, as a presidential candidate Bush often seemed to pull his punches. Even at the New Jersey flag factory that became synonymous with his campaign's exploitation of patriotic symbols — and his attack on Dukakis for being soft on flag burning — the kinder, gentler Bush lacked the stomach to stick to his script and launched instead into a description of how he was "haunted" by urban kids who were victims of violence.

Bush often appeared a leader for whom politics kept getting in the way of statecraft. He said as much in the midst of the 1990 budget negotiations. "I must say I hate this dealing with Congress and these budget matters," Bush complained. "I much prefer foreign affairs."

The author gives Bush high scores for his international efforts, crediting the president and a superb diplomatic-military team with managing the breakup of the Soviet empire and launching fresh peace initiatives in the Middle East. Parmet makes clear that Manuel Noriega was a bipartisan embarrassment, deserving of a worse

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fate than the Miami jail cell he presently inhabits. He praises Bush's tour de force in building the international coalition against Saddam Hussein as "about as fine an example of presidential crisis management that can be found in the 20th century." Contrary to popular impressions at the time, on the issue of Iraq the president's backbone needed no stiffening by Margaret Thatcher or anyone else. Nor did the Bush White House ever believe that economic sanctions alone could eject Saddam from Kuwait.

In light of recent events, it's tempting to fault Bush and his advisers for not "finishing the job" — except that the job as defined by the United Nations was finished in early 1991. Wanting more than anything else to free his own nation from the Vietnam syndrome, Bush concluded offensive operations in hopes of maintaining his domestic coalition. What John Sununu dubbed "the Hundred Hour War" became a catch phrase on the order of "Read My Lips" — policy neatly packaged for the very media machine the president affected to despise.

After Saddam, Parmet detects a loss, if not of nerve, of Bush's characteristic ebullience. He was "tired" of being in the spotlight, the president wrote in March 1991. "I've been at the head table for many years, and now I wonder what else is out there." His themeless 1992 campaign offered scant alternative to the brilliantly honed empathy of Bill Clinton. But then, Bush had always been better at holding office than seeking it.

Before leaving the White House Bush described the "wonder and majesty" he had always felt about the presidency. "I've tried to keep it; I've tried to serve with no taint or dishonor; no conflict of interest; nothing to sully this beautiful place and this job I've been privileged to hold." To the end, he resisted the role of braggadocio he had been warned against since childhood by his formidable mother. Based on the evidence of this deeply researched, scrupulously balanced volume, Bush's modesty may be misplaced.

RICHARD NORTON SMITH *is the author of* The Colonel: The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick.

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In this "sharp and witty"* book, medical journalist Michael Fumento takes the clearest look yet at America's obesity epidemic. *The Fat of the Land* explodes popular myths about weight, takes on the multi-billion dollar diet industry, and makes a personal case against "fat acceptance" rhetoric.

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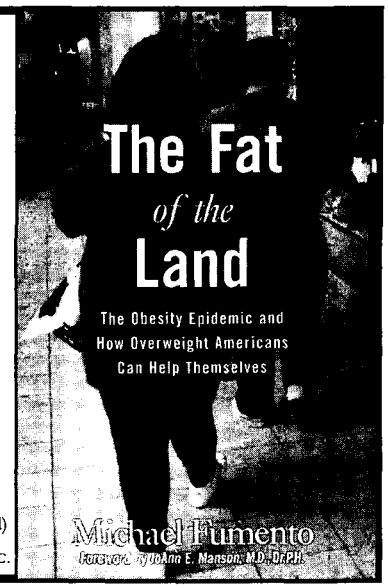

Talking Across the Color Line

by Juan Williams

DAVID SHIPLER HAS A SENSITIVE ear, and he has found and ably presented a wide range of bright and compelling people talking about how race affects their lives. But too often there seems to be no point to the succession of stories and confessions in this book. With few exceptions, our narrator removes any critical judgment from his telling of their tales. The result is that Shipler comes across less as a guiding intelligence through his concatenation of voices than as an accidental tourist or a foreign correspondent, sending letters back home from a strange land.

A COUNTRY OF STRANGERS: Blacks and Whites in America
by David K. Shipler
Alfred A. Knopf, $30

In fact, Shipler was a foreign correspondent for *The New York Times* and won the Pulitzer Prize for his previous book, *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land.* The new book has the feel of a writer who has brought the foreign correspondent's detached perspective back home and applied it to the racial divide. That may be a good idea in principle. But the Middle East book was written for an audience of Americans who don't know the reality of the day-to-day Arab-Israeli struggle, while this book on race relations is being presented to people who have lived through O.J., Willie Horton, and Proposition 209.

The result is a loose mix of perspectives that does not include the best challenges to affirmative action or even to controversial political figures like Washington D.C.'s mayor, Marion Barry. Instead, supporters of such programs or people get a free pass to tell their side of the story. Barry's story, for example, comes across in these pages as a biblical resurrection: a black man victimized by drugs and forced to jail before finally being reborn. There is no analysis of his corrupt hold on power in the city, or of the damage he did to the nationwide struggle for black political power. Similarly, there are no voices speaking out about the virtues of racial integration and assimilation, despite their value to many white ethnic immigrants as well as most blacks.

When Shipler does inject his voice, in the introduction to the book and the concluding chapter, he offers the simple but profound insight that black and white Americans live as

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strangers. It is not because they don't know each other, Shipler contends, but because their minds are filled with myths about each other. For example, white Americans fear physical violence and crime from blacks, despite the fact that most crimes perpetrated by blacks are committed against other blacks. On the other side of the racial divide, Shipler has blacks testify about white brutality, committed by vicious cops and lynch mobs, offered as justification for many blacks' belief that whites are the really violent race.

Having allowed a cast of blacks and whites to explore several areas of mutual misconception, Shipler concludes that whites have the greater responsibility for distorting reality and exacerbating the racial divide. As the majority race, they too often allow themselves to pretend that racial issues don't exist — thereby forcing the burden of dealing with them onto minorities. "Few white Americans," Shipler writes, "have much grasp of how they are seen by African-Americans because few whites ask the question and if they did most blacks would probably be more polite than honest. We do not converse across the racial line."

Shipler's final insight is that whites need help in opening their eyes to the persistence of racism, and that help has to come from black Americans because blacks are attuned to "the nuances of bias, which must be discerned if we are to move toward racial justice."

In the introduction Shipler claims his book is not about statistics or public policy. "It is about people and the way they think and their images of one another, about what happens when their paths intersect — It is a journey along the crucial fault line of America." But by the end, with its emphasis on whites who are blind to the advantage of being white, it seems clear that what Shipler is really offering in these pages is an argument for affirmative action.

Nonetheless, one can disagree with that prescription and still find the book well worth reading. Shipler has done a service simply by showing blacks and whites how seldom they have any idea what is going on in each others' heads.

JUAN WILLIAMS *is the author of a forthcoming biography of Justice Thurgood Marshall.*

Tribal Warfare

by Lawrence J. Korb

FEW WOULD DENY THAT ETHnic strife is part and parcel of geopolitics, or that the United States needs a sensible, consistent policy on how to deal with these ethnic conflicts. This eminently readable, but well-documented (430 footnotes) study discusses how the U.S. can develop such a policy. Callahan's prescription involves three interrelated components: First, the U.S. must develop the capacity to predict, prevent, and intervene with military force when necessary in these "unwinnable wars." Second, while the U.S. should not blindly become engaged in conflicts that are peripheral to the country's core interests, such conflicts can be relevant to America's interests. Third, U.S. involvement in ethnic conflicts, excluding military action, carries no guarantee of success. But U.S. credibility will suffer far more if the United States fails to try military action in the face of unchecked barbarism than if it tries and fails, as it did in Lebanon and Somalia.

Callahan begins his study by noting two important, but often overlooked, facts. First, ethnic conflict is an age-old problem. Despite the claims of the foreign policy establishment, it has not been caused by the end of the Cold War. Indeed, during the Cold War, ethnic conflict often exploded with unspeakable levels of inhumanity in places like Biafra, Burundi, East Pakistan, and Lebanon. Second, the number of ethnic conflicts in the future will be limited. The world is now at the tail end of the third great wave of state fragmentation during this century. The first wave was triggered by the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, the second by the dissolution of the great colonial empires, and the third by the collapse of communism.

UNWINNABLE WARS: American Power and Ethnic Conflict
by David Callahan
Hill and Wang, $24

Callahan notes correctly that formulating U.S. policy toward these conflicts involves a "dazzling array of calculations." Policy makers must make judgments about the merits of particular nationality movements, their chances of creating viable states, and the available alternatives to statehood. Then they must assess how the struggle can affect global stability, and finally, determine what national interests are at stake and find the appropriate policy instruments.

Given the dazzling array, policy generalization would appear to be both futile and misguided. But there is enough sameness to justify them. All ethnic conflicts pass through these stages: rising tensions, onset of violence, and lulls or stalemates. At each stage, the U.S. has a standard array of policy tools to predict, prevent, and resolve the conflicts. The bulk of the book surveys the historical record to illustrate the way the tools have been employed in the past 30 years by this nation in order to show what works and what doesn't.

Examining the historical record demonstrates that during the past three decades, actual U.S. intervention in ethnic conflicts has been proportionate to U.S. interests. Except in Lebanon, the expenditure of diplomatic energy, financial resources, and human life has generally matched the degree of secondary U.S. interests. To the extent that these efforts have been disproportionate, the most common mistake has been an under-commitment of resources, especially at the early stages. The record suggests that the common argument against limited interaction — that it will inevitably lead to excessive commitments, or "mission creep" — is exaggerated.

Compared to fighting fascism or containing communism, there is little glamour or excitement in getting involved in these unwinnable wars. There is just the potential for steady progress toward a world with less killing. This is reason enough to read Callahan's book carefully

LAWRENCE J. KORB, *a former assistant secretary of defense, is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.*

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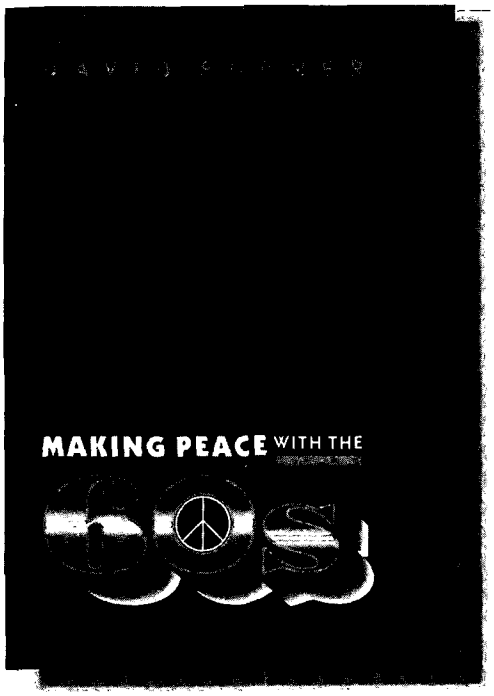

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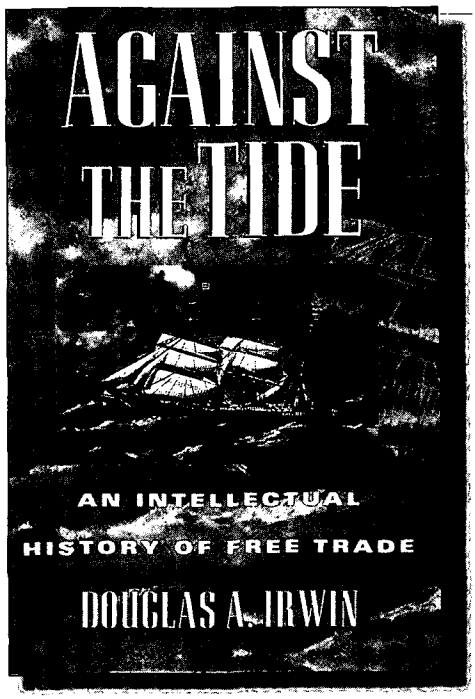

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